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## IMAGE OF A MAN

### Self-construction in the Journal of Keith Vaughan

Belsey, Alex

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**IMAGE OF A MAN**  
**Self-construction in the**  
**Journal of**  
**Keith Vaughan**

ALEX BELSEY  
King's College London

Thesis submitted to the University of London  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## **Abstract**

The British painter Keith Vaughan (1912-77) spent his career studying the male figure and its relationship to its environment. Yet Vaughan was not simply a gifted painter; he was an erudite, compelling, compulsive writer. The personal journal written from 1939 until his suicide in 1977 – sixty-one volumes in total – reveals a man whose ambitions as a painter required an ongoing expression in language, a practice that was integral to his creative life. Vaughan's journal-writing established a complex interrelation between his attitudes towards morality, aesthetics, love and sex, and his own insecurities as a man and as an artist. This study – the result of an extensive archive-based research project – examines Vaughan's journal as a continuous literary text in which he constructed his identity by establishing his positions on war, society, autobiography, and art. The critical approach of this study draws on diverse theoretical perspectives and delves into Vaughan's own reading to reconstruct the reasoning that informed such positions.

Beginning with Vaughan's wartime writing on his conscientious objection, this study explores how he situated himself as an outsider, a misunderstood yet superior outcast whose homosexuality and principles distanced him from society. This study traces the evolution of his outsider identity, its role in consolidating his visual subject matter, and its influence on the perspective from which he would paint the male figure. Engaging with his wartime reading, attempts at autobiography, and burgeoning theory on art practice, this study reveals the centrality of journal-writing to Vaughan's construction of the creative individual as an ideal type of 'the artist' in whose image he could construct himself. Through careful cross-referencing of the original manuscripts with Vaughan's self-edited edition of his first twenty-seven years of journal-writing, this study concludes by analysing Vaughan's attempts through self-editorship to curate his legacy in the form of autobiographical artefact.

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## Image of a Man: an Introduction

The desire to make this journal grew out of my failure to live a life.<sup>1</sup>

Keith Vaughan's life-long subject of enquiry was the male figure, and specifically the nude male figure. Across five decades of sketches, gouaches, and oils, he interrogated ideas of identity and isolation by creating compositions infused with the tensions between the individual and the group, the outsider and society. He is perhaps best known for his *Assembly of Figures* series, the first of which is dated 1952 and the ninth of which was completed in 1976, the year before his death. The *Assemblies* arrange male figures, usually three or four, in ambiguous landscapes in which their variously posed bodies communicate at once an affinity with one another and yet a profound disconnection. This is Vaughan's image of a man: at once amongst other men and utterly alone. This is certainly the premise from which Vaughan set out in 1939 to write his journal; believing himself, at the age of twenty-seven, to have already failed to live successfully or happily, he commenced journal-writing to construct his identity in a new image that justified and celebrated his sense of difference and distance. The writing of the journal would prove a life-long project, a way of navigating the past whilst addressing the concerns of the present and projecting into an uncertain future.

This study will reinvigorate the currently underdeveloped image of Keith Vaughan by placing the journal at the centre of a new understanding of his life and visual practice. Vaughan believed strongly that art was the arena in which emotional and philosophical ideas were brought together; the writer and editor Alan Ross recalls that 'when he talked about painting it was as someone who thought long and hard, not only about technical problems but about the relevance of art to every aspect of living'.<sup>2</sup> This study will make clear that Vaughan's thoughts were almost always worked through primarily in his journal-writing, a practice that allowed him to situate his own tastes, opinions, and ambitions within a narrative of his own life and development. It was only by constructing through journal-writing his own image of himself as a man and as an artist that he refined the subject matter and perspective of his visual practice. This study will also present the journal as a

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<sup>1</sup> Keith Vaughan, 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1940, Journal, vol.4, p.68. Complete Journal held at Tate Archive, London, catalogue ref: TGA200817/1. Hereafter all references to Vaughan's journal will be made in parentheses in the format explained in 'Notes on the Text'.

<sup>2</sup> Alan Ross, 'Introduction', in Keith Vaughan, *Journals, 1939 – 1977* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), pp.vii-xv; p.viii

significant literary text and as an important document of social, political, and cultural currents spanning five decades. In particular the journal offers new insights into the gay male experience in mid-twentieth-century Britain at a time when homosexuality was still illegal. Despite his eventual admission into the society of such luminaries as W. H. Auden, E. M. Forster, Christopher Isherwood, and David Hockney, the self-doubting and self-deprecating nature of Vaughan's accounts in his journal provides a candid outsider perspective on this milieu from an artist who was forever unsure of his place. This study follows the threads of the social, political, and aesthetic debates that make Vaughan's journal such a rich and complex text. In the process, as will be discussed later in this introduction, this study puts forward a new image of Vaughan by offering something akin to a critical biography of his life and work. But always the focus remains on the journal as a text that constructs the identity of its subject, who is also its author, through literary means. Ultimately, this study seeks to demonstrate through its analysis of Vaughan's journal as a case study the fertile ground to be found in the literary study of journals and diaries and how further study can enrich the scholarly field of life-writing.

### **The Life and Work of Keith Vaughan**

John Keith Vaughan was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1912 in Selsey, West Sussex. His father Eric (1883-1935) walked out on the family when Vaughan was five years old, also leaving his mother Gladys (1881-1976) and his younger brother Dick (1918-40). As a child Vaughan attended Christ's Hospital boarding school in Sussex and received special tutelage when his aptitude for drawing was discovered. As a young man he worked as a layout artist at the advertising agency Lintas, a branch of Unilever, until the outbreak of the Second World War. Vaughan acknowledged his homosexuality early in his formative years and had a number of short-lived relationships. In the pre-war years his recreational time was largely spent developing his artistic sensibilities and indulging his interest in ballet and photography.

Vaughan commenced the first volume of his personal journal in August 1939 as the outbreak of war loomed. Intending to be a conscientious objector he joined the St John Ambulance service. In September 1940 he was briefly imprisoned in Guildford jail after attempting to paint a trench in the countryside. In 1941 he was conscripted into the Non-Combatant Corps, moving from Ilfracombe to Bulford and

then in 1942 to Ashton Gifford near Codford in Wiltshire. He would see out the final years of the war at Eden Camp, a facility holding German and Italian prisoners of war. His first exhibitions of pictures took place during wartime and his work caught the eye of both John Lehmann and Peter Watson whose circles he entered into. During wartime Vaughan struck up a friendship and correspondence with the painter Graham Sutherland; he also met John Minton, with whom after demobilization in 1946 he shared premises at Hamilton Terrace, Maida Vale, London until 1952. Through Sutherland and Minton he would become associated with the 'Neo-Romantic' circle although the influence of Henry Moore and his aforementioned contemporaries would soon be surpassed by his appreciation of Paul Cézanne and Henri Matisse. Concentrating on studies of male figures Vaughan's work from the 1950s became increasingly abstract yet would always retain a strong figurative basis.

Vaughan earned enough money from commissions and sales of his work to live comfortably in London. In 1952 he took a lease on a flat in a large house at Belsize Park, NW3. For much of the 1950s, whilst establishing himself in London's art world, he failed to maintain his journal to the same extent as in previous years. He taught at the Camberwell School of Art (1946-8) and the Central School of Arts and Crafts (1948-58) and was a visiting tutor at the Slade School of Fine Art (1959-77). He travelled in the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the United States, taking a temporary post as resident artist at Iowa State University in 1959. At Belsize Park he lived with long-term partner Ramsay McClure (1924-81), with whom he had a very troubled relationship, yet maintained his sporadic sexual and emotional involvements with young delinquents Patrick McGuinness and Johnny Walsh; these trysts were partly responsible for the resurgence in Vaughan's journal-writing in the late 1950s. Suffering from something of a mid-life crisis, despite his professional success and ostensible domestic comfort, his journal-writing reached a hitherto unknown intensity of depression and sexual obsession.

Vaughan was approached in 1965 to self-edit a collection of journal entries which was eventually published as *Journal & Drawings* (1966). A revised version incorporating Vaughan's original selection plus later journal entries (1965-77) edited by Alan Ross appeared posthumously in 1989. Vaughan was diagnosed with bowel cancer in 1975 and became increasingly housebound and miserable. Having lost the ability to achieve, much less maintain, an erection, he declared that he could no longer paint. Rather than suffer further from the pain of his treatment and the indignity of his reduced state, Vaughan chose to end his life. On 4<sup>th</sup> November 1977

he ingested a lethal cocktail of barbiturates whilst sat alone at home. Keith Vaughan died with his journal in front of him, having recorded his final thoughts before the pen slipped from the page.

Vaughan has been largely neglected by mainstream art history. *Modern English Painters*, the three-volume work by esteemed art historian and Tate director (1938-64) John Rothenstein, has a reputation for its exhaustive coverage so we would expect to find some acknowledgement of Vaughan and his work in the third volume, subtitled *Wood to Hockney* and first published in 1974. Yet the only two mentions of him are once amongst a list of names reeled off as guests at Robert Colquhoun's flat and again amongst a list of names that Colquhoun was likely to see at favourite drinking haunts<sup>3</sup>; nothing is said of Vaughan himself, his work, or even his connections to other significant artists. After his death Vaughan remained a mere footnote in many accounts of British post-war painting and was often unceremoniously lumped in with the Neo-Romantic painters of the mid-twentieth century. The term 'Neo-Romantic' was coined by Raymond Mortimer in a *New Statesman* article on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1942 and was simply applied to any artist who could not be easily categorized as a Surrealist, Realist, or Abstractionist.<sup>4</sup> Since Mortimer's coinage this term has been a convenient tag for a range of wildly differing artists who shared little other than their period of activity. Due to his uneasy relationship with success, and his unwillingness to affiliate himself with anything resembling a group or movement, Vaughan never took action to assert his place in art history and so has been posthumously assigned this tag and reduced to a name on a list. In Frances Spalding's book *British Art Since 1900*, first published 1986, we find only a passing mention of Vaughan as 'also associated with this group', meaning the Neo-Romantics,<sup>5</sup> and two instances of him appearing on a list of names.<sup>6</sup> To this day Vaughan remains relatively overlooked even in contexts in which discussion of his work would prove highly relevant. For example, the 2014 exhibition *Bare Life: Bacon, Freud, Hockney and others*, which focussed on London artists painting sitters from life between 1950-80, covers a subject on which Vaughan produced highly significant work, but the focus remains on its three headliners with the addition of Frank Auerbach, Richard Hamilton, R. B. Kitaj, Leon Kossof, Euan Uglow, William Coldstream, Michael Andrews, etc. In the handsomely produced catalogue for this show there is only one mention of Vaughan, in Andrew

<sup>3</sup> John Rothenstein, *Modern English Painters*, vol. III: *Wood to Hockney* (London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1976), pp.179-80 & pp.183-4

<sup>4</sup> Malcolm Yorke, *Keith Vaughan: his Life and Work* (London: Constable, 1990), pp.88-9

<sup>5</sup> Frances Spalding, *British Art Since 1900* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2002), p.132

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.139 & p.145



Brighton's opening essay, in which his disapproval of pop art is cited, accompanied by one small reproduction of his work: his *Standing Figure* from 1960.<sup>7</sup>

Outside of the mainstream some interest has persisted in Vaughan in the specific context of him being a gay male painter whose primary subject was the nude male figure. Edward Lucie-Smith has written on Vaughan's drawings specifically through the lens of his homosexuality<sup>8</sup> while Emmanuel Cooper, in a book more concerned with photographing nudes, has devoted a paragraph to Vaughan and acknowledged his use of figures in paintings 'to convey and comment on the essential universal qualities of 'maleness''<sup>9</sup>. It is this word 'universal' that should guide any re-appraisal of Vaughan's work and its contribution to twentieth-century painting. There are signs that a re-appraisal may now be underway following a major retrospective at Pallant House Gallery in Chichester and the publication of several important volumes in the centenary year of Vaughan's birth. In her review of three such volumes, all published in 2012, Jane Rye hones in on Philip Vann's biography *Keith Vaughan* and warns that 'isolating the erotic, homosexual impulse which (indisputably) drove him' risks a too-narrow focus that 'impedes a direct response to the more universal, monumental art he struggled to achieve'.<sup>10</sup> While the erotic nature of his practice and work cannot be overlooked, any re-appraisal of Vaughan needs to address the full extent of intellectual enquiry that informed his desire to produce universalizing images of figures, stripped of political or social signifiers, expressing something essentially human. There may now be a bigger audience than ever for such a re-appraisal; in his centenary year Vaughan was reported to be 'the best-selling artist at the recent 20/21 British art fair', outstripping both Damien Hirst and Mary Fedden with a notable and impressive number of dealer sales.<sup>11</sup> If, as the influential critic Robert Hughes once claimed, 'the real pictorial genius of English art has everything to do with the peculiar stress and intensity of natural vision'<sup>12</sup>, then Vaughan and his enquiries into the essential

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<sup>7</sup> Andrew Brighton, 'Explaining Pictures to a Living Heir', in *Bare Life: Bacon, Freud, Hockney and Others. London Artists Working from Life 1950-80* (Munich: Hirmer, 2014), pp.12-7; p.16 & p.17

<sup>8</sup> Edward Lucie-Smith, 'Keith Vaughan', in *Keith Vaughan, 1912-1977: Drawings of the Young Male*, ed. Philip Graham and Stephen Boyd (London: Éditions Aubrey Walter, 1991), pp.5-8

<sup>9</sup> Emmanuel Cooper, *Fully Exposed: the Male Nude in Photography* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), p.26

<sup>10</sup> Jane Rye, 'Tormented Talent', in *The Spectator Magazine*, 8<sup>th</sup> Dec 2012 [<http://www.spectator.co.uk/books/8777801/tormented-talent-2/> <accessed 14/02/2015>]

<sup>11</sup> Colin Gleadell, '1940s painter Keith Vaughan is a hit at 20/21 British art fair', in *The Telegraph*, 25<sup>th</sup> Sept 2012 [<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/artsales/9565198/1940s-painter-Keith-Vaughan-is-a-hit-at-2021-British-art-fair.html> <accessed 12/02/2015>]

<sup>12</sup> Robert Hughes, 'English Art in the Twentieth Century' (1987), in *Nothing If Not Critical: Selected Essays on Art and Artists* (London: Harvill Press, 2001), pp.177-80; p.180

condition of the human form should continue to grow in stature amongst dealers, curators, and the viewing public.

Despite signs of this growth and the gradual re-appraisal of Vaughan in print there has yet to be a significant analysis of his journal as a literary text and a major work in its own right. Malcolm Yorke, in his 1990 biography *Keith Vaughan: his Life and Work*, explains that any sustained textual analysis of the journal itself was 'beyond the scope' of his book.<sup>13</sup> Sure enough the journal, while quoted from extensively, is only used by Yorke as a resource with which to illustrate key episodes or evidence certain opinions; he treats the journal more as a document of fact than a text with its own literary properties and carefully constructed narrative. Material from Vaughan's journal continues to be used for predominantly illustrative purposes. *Keith Vaughan* by Philip Vann is a timely work of biography considering that Yorke's is no longer in print, yet once again the journal is used simply as a supporting source. Nevertheless Vann does gesture towards the need to revisit the literary achievements of Vaughan's journal when praising him as 'a born writer' whose endeavours 'include some of the most thoughtful, perceptive and lyrical of any twentieth-century British writer'.<sup>14</sup> Gerard Hastings has been most willing to allow excerpts from Vaughan's journal to tell their own story; his selections for the book accompanying the Osborne Samuel Gallery's show *Keith Vaughan: Gouaches, Drawings & Prints* (2011) trace Vaughan's (often very brief) references to his practice in the medium of gouache.<sup>15</sup> And yet the selections made, while they do much to communicate Vaughan's prickly and self-doubting character in his own voice, expose the difficulty in using the journal to provide a helpful commentary on Vaughan's working practices and pictorial technique. Vaughan certainly never intended his journal to function primarily as a working log or a commentary on his techniques. His journal was indeed more concerned with philosophical approaches to art than practical ones; he asks, 'why try and describe a painting, it merely sounds like a catalogue' (16.08.41; J6, p.69). Hastings' impressively researched and beautifully appointed volume *Drawing to a Close: the Final Journals of Keith Vaughan* (2012) reproduces the final two years' worth of journal-writing verbatim but uses this material primarily as a narrative framework onto which Hastings' commentary and annotations flesh out a kind of non-linear biography. Given that Vaughan's journal has thus far been used primarily as a biographical resource, this

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<sup>13</sup> Yorke, p.18

<sup>14</sup> Philip Vann with Gerard Hastings, *Keith Vaughan* (London: Lund Humphries in association with Osborne Samuel, 2012), p.36

<sup>15</sup> 'Keith Vaughan: Painting with Gouache', ed. Gerard Hastings, in *Keith Vaughan: Gouaches, Drawings & Prints* (London: Osborne Samuel, 2011), pp.13-24

study will be the first in the limited bibliography on Vaughan to analyse the journal as a literary text and as a major work in its own right.

### **Researching the Journal of Keith Vaughan**

Vaughan's journal is a series of sixty-one volumes written in variously sized notebooks. Each is numbered on its cover with a roman numeral; as Vaughan missed out number *LIII* the volumes thereafter are numbered incorrectly, meaning the final volume is numbered *LXII*. The notebooks themselves, particularly those in which the wartime volumes (one to twenty-five) were written, are predominantly the size of school exercise books. There are some early volumes written in larger notebooks, for example the third volume, but in general Vaughan did not consistently use larger notebooks until the 1960s. He did not choose notebooks with any formatting beyond ruled lines and margins, meaning that his journal-writing was never practiced in accordance with, or in opposition to, the parameters we associate with a conventionally printed diary. He did not, at any stage, attempt to number the pages of his journal. In total the journal consists of almost 5,000 pages written in generally small script with varying degrees of legibility. During his lifetime Vaughan kept the volumes of his journal in a chest once owned by his father; on the inside of the lid is the only known example of Eric Vaughan's signature. Following Vaughan's death the journal passed into the possession of his friend and executor Alan Ross. Since 2008 the journal has been held at Tate Archive at Tate Britain, Millbank, London. The journal has been catalogued as part of their Keith Vaughan Archive which also comprises correspondence, notes, press cuttings, and visual work.

The extensive research for this study has been conducted primarily at Tate Archive Reading Rooms where each volume of Vaughan's journal has been read in its entirety. Thorough attention has been paid to not only the written content but the form, physical properties, and organizational devices of each volume. The long process of reading the journal was accompanied by meticulous cross-referencing of particular entries with their counterparts in the published edition *Journal & Drawings* which Vaughan self-edited; the comparative notes gradually revealed the extent of textual variations between the original journal manuscripts and the published edition. Vaughan's preparatory notes and typescripts for the published

edition, also held at Tate Archive, were consulted for the purpose of better understanding the processes of revision undertaken during his self-editorship. The research for this study has also encompassed Tate Archive's collections of visual work by Vaughan which include advertising copy from the Lintas years and wartime sketches. While the boxes of written correspondence held at Tate Archive have been consulted, it has not been a concern of this study to cross-reference events and opinions recounted in the journal with those recounted in his correspondence; this study is concerned with how Vaughan writes the narrative of his journal and not with the verification of such biographical facts as his whereabouts or conversations.

Whilst reading Vaughan's journal it has been necessary to ascertain the purposes and rhythms of his need to write. The journal was commenced at what Vaughan insisted was a point of crisis and throughout the early volumes we find the recurrence of the word 'failure'. He declares in the summer of 1940 that, 'The purpose of this autobiography is to try to understand and account for my failure in life' (01.06.40; J3, p.118), and then reasons immediately afterwards, 'That in a sense is contradictory for to succeed will be to have succeeded.' With today's greater awareness of mental illness Vaughan would almost certainly be diagnosed with clinical depression, yet the alleged paradox of writing successfully about failure suggests that the startlingly negative voice of much of his journal-writing was due not only to his depressive states but to the need for the problem of his failure to remain unanswered, thus securing the continued relevance of the journal. Sure enough, twenty-five years later, he laments how his 'public success' conceals 'a private total failure' (03.07.65; J47, p.39). The longevity of the journal can be attributed in part to its continual depiction of a flawed subject whose failure remains an insoluble problem. During this study's research into the journal it has become clear that Vaughan was more likely to write in states of agitation or emotional intensity (particularly in the wartime period). He did not write a journal entry every day and often left gaps of days or weeks at a time between entries. Such gaps may be attributable to a genuine frustration with the commitment that journal-writing demands; only three months in he claims to 'hate writing this diary' but concedes that such a form of self-analysis is the only road promising 'escape from ~~my~~ the chaos of my existence' (27.11.39; J2, p.28). Several years later he clarifies that it is only when 'feeling deeply about things' that he can write (22.05.43; J15, p.20), thus confirming that the journal is no quotidian record but rather a practice of transcribing thoughts arising in heightened emotional states. During the process of reading Vaughan's journal it has therefore been necessary to develop a sensitivity to

the rhythms and frequencies of his journal-writing in order to identify its major currents and key ideas.

The question of the journal's audience has been a major consideration throughout the research for this study. Although the journal entry dated 19<sup>th</sup> June 1940 was rewritten for publication in *Penguin New Writing* (as addressed in chapter three of this study), there is scant evidence, certainly during the wartime years, that Vaughan ever expected his journal to be read by anyone other than himself. The incriminating nature of the romantic episodes recounted in its pages meant that Vaughan was highly unlikely to have shown his journal to any of his wartime comrades or to have even acknowledged its existence. Considering his success in getting the aforementioned excerpt printed in a literary periodical, there is the possibility that some of the journal's more lush descriptive passages may have been written with one eye on future publication. Yet we find that Vaughan was quick to reprimand himself for attempting to write for an audience: 'This is intended for a journal, not a contribution to the treasures of literature.' (05.08.40; J3, p.273) As he became a successful painter in the post-war years, and therefore a public figure, he was aware that his journal, if only posthumously, would become of interest. Nevertheless, he remained fiercely protective of its contents and on the few occasions that his partner Ramsay found and read the journal without his permission some of their nastiest rows ensued (03.05.63; J44, p.16). In one notable entry Vaughan laments how Ramsay is compelled to 'pry into my secrets – and let me know he has pried' before launching a spiteful diatribe against 'his boring, inept, incessant presence' in case Ramsay should ever read those words (13.09.64; J46, p.8). The following year, he begins an entry by confirming that the journal was 'commenced originally for my own private pleasure & will continue so' (17.05.65; J47, p.13). The importance of the practice of journal-writing to Vaughan and the importance of the contents of his journal as a record for him to consult are the focus of this study. Vaughan repeatedly acknowledges that his journal-writing is a practice performed for his own benefit and development; in a wartime entry in which he admits to doing 'little painting these days' he nevertheless recognizes the journal's importance by admitting that 'the time is not without progress as my ideas + approaches to painting are being cleared up' (03.06.43; J15, p.43). In his middle-age, when the taste of success had soured, Vaughan hoped that the posthumous account of his journal would be a rebuttal against his sanitized public image. He may insist 'that the truth must be told', yet when he asks, 'do I in fact tell all the truth?', Vaughan is concerned not for a reader or for posterity but with remaining true to himself (18.12.64; J46, p.41). Ultimately, his concern for a readership came a

far distant second to his sincerely expressed commitment to being truthful to himself. His experiments and frustrations with journal-writing all sprung from a need for fidelity to his own thoughts and feelings, reminding us of Sylvia Plath's reflections in her own journal: 'After something happens to you, you go to write it down, and either you over dramatize it, or underplay it, exaggerate the wrong parts or ignore the important ones [...] you never write it quite the way you want to.'<sup>16</sup> Throughout the process of reading Vaughan's journal the recurrent question has been: what did Vaughan hope that the practice of journal-writing would achieve?

### **The Critical Approach of this Study**

This study is the first to treat Vaughan's journal as a literary text and a major creative work in its own right. This study employs the methodology of close textual analysis to examine the journal's literary effects and their implications. As this study will reveal, the journal contains many entries that engage with philosophy and theory, so it is necessary to first clarify why this study considers the journal to be primarily a literary text and not a theoretical tract. The term 'literary' is applied to the journal because Vaughan employs many of the conventions of literary genres in his journal-writing: emotionally heightened rhetoric; poetic effects; the use of scenes and conversations in which characters enact themes and debates; an associative rather than a logical means of relating ideas and concepts; and the progression of a narrative of personal growth. Even those passages of the journal which are more concerned with engaging with theory are themselves literary; after all, is not art theory, from Walter Pater to Clive Bell to Clement Greenberg, predominantly literary in nature, an attempt to give expression and organization through language to the power of a highly subjective response? Literary effects compel the writer of a journal or diary to continue by assuring them that their thoughts and experiences provide dynamic and valuable material. In an early entry Vaughan acknowledges the need for, and value of, such effects: 'To write thoughtlessly aimlessly – as words and phrases occur, avoiding as far as possible any attempt at literary design or dramatic effect – [is] difficult for me. And when achieved how annoyingly dull – and empty.' (02.10.39; J1, p.50) In analysing such effects this study and its findings put forward the case for journals and diaries to be

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<sup>16</sup> Sylvia Plath, *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath, 1950-1962*, ed. Karen V. Kukil (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 2000), p.10

subjected to the literary critical methodology of close textual analysis covering word choice, register, poetic intention, and character development.

It is necessary to clarify that this study is not analysing the journal of a painter in order to draw conclusions as to the commonalities or confluence between the literary and the visual. While ‘painting and writing have much to tell each other’, according to Virginia Woolf in her conversation with Walter Sickert<sup>17</sup>, this study is focussed resolutely on the latter. Where this study makes reference to Vaughan’s visual practice and work it does so not to speculate on processes of translation between literary and visual forms but to suggest how the positions and perspectives developed through his journal-writing informed his perspective on his visual subject matter. This study does not intend to use Vaughan’s journal to make a distinction between an ‘artist’s journal’ and a less specialized and more common personal journal. One might assume that an artist’s journal would be concerned with a specifically ‘artistic’ project or problem, but we find instead that Vaughan’s subject is himself: his insecurities, his memories, his relationships, his ambitions. This is his project, and the project to varying degrees of all journal-writers. This study, therefore, does not seek to prioritize the artist’s journal or claim that journals that are written by artists are necessarily of greater interest than those that are not; rather, from a methodological point of view, an artist’s visual work provides a body of evidence as to their perspective on the world and themselves which can support the perspective we have discerned from their journal.

The focus of this study is journal-writing as a means of self-construction. Vaughan’s journal is an example of the journal or diary initiated at a point of crisis as its author/subject expresses dissatisfaction with the person they currently believe themselves to be and takes the first step towards deciding who they would rather be. Narratives of becoming abound in popular biography and life-writing scholarship alike, but even a study such as Barbara Lounsberry’s *Becoming Virginia Woolf: Her Early Diaries and the Diaries She Read* (2014), despite its engagement with Woolf’s various forms of diary-writing, is less concerned with identity formation than with the development in technique and style of a major literary figure. While Philippe Lejeune, a great ambassador for the critical study of journals and diaries, places the necessary emphasis on journal/diary-writing as an act rather than simply a style of writing, he does not pay adequate attention to this aspect of the act of journal-writing in which the subject is made and remade; in ‘How do Diaries End?’, for example, he provides four categories of impulse behind the desire to write a journal

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<sup>17</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Walter Sickert: a Conversation* (London: Hogarth Press, 1934), p.22

or diary but there is no useful term or definition provided for this aspect.<sup>18</sup> This study introduces the term ‘self-construction’ and in doing so expands this field of study that has remained too narrow and underserved for too long.

But how was the term ‘self-construction’ arrived at? In finding an adequate term to communicate the processes of forming identity there was the inevitable need for the prefix ‘self-’ that confirms a reflective process whereby the author is turning back to regard themselves as subject and thus negotiating a split that will allow them to play both the agent and the subject who must sit as still as possible, ready to be acted upon. Why not ‘self-reflection’? Indeed, many people consider the journal or diary to be like a mirror, reflecting back an image that can be easily interpreted. Many people who read published journals and diaries (and, for that matter, auto/biographies and memoirs) do so with an expectation of seeing the subject, who is also the author, clearly like the reflection in a mirror; it is often expected that such life-writing texts have been written to reflect what their subject already *is*. Why not, then, ‘self-image’? Again, the connotations could be of the journal/diary-writer providing a stable, coherent picture awaiting expert analysis. We arrive at ‘self-construction’ by realizing that journals and diaries are continually in the process of making and remaking the image of the subject that their author wishes to reflect back to their reader (who is usually only the author themselves). Art is a symbol and a literalization of this back-and-forth between reflecting and constructing, an ongoing and unending process that helps us understand, for instance, why a painter would revisit over decades the same visual subject again and again in their work; journal and diary writing too is an art. With the term ‘self-construction’ decided, let us think of the journal or diary as a construction site strewn with material. It is also important to clarify that, rather than an ‘act’ as termed by Lejeune, this study refers to the ‘practice’ of journal-writing; writing a journal or diary is not always a display given by a skilled performer but is instead and in every case a process, and in some a ceremony, in which the author continually develops the means by which they write about their subject.

Throughout this study we follow Vaughan as he constructs his identity through journal-writing; deciding first how to position himself in relation to others and then what he would like to become and achieve. ‘I must have a mould in which to pour my existence’, he writes after a year of journal-writing, aware that the self cannot simply *be* but must occupy its own space and slowly take form (22.11.40; J4,

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<sup>18</sup> Philippe Lejeune, ‘How Do Diaries End?’, in *On Diary*, ed. Jeremy D. Popkin and Julie Rak, trans. Katherine Durnin (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2009), pp.187-200; pp.194-6



p.89). Later he explains, 'Always I have tried to visualize the type of person other people would like me to be, and then set about trying to impersonate that vision' (21.12.43; J17, p.53). While this study, as stated above, is not particularly concerned with privileging the artist who writes or with looking for a confluence between writing and painting, it is concerned with the importance of self-construction to an artist. Otto Rank, in *Art and Artist* (1932), argues that creativity 'begins with the individual himself – that is, with the self-making of the personality into the artist'.<sup>19</sup> An individual's self-construction as an artist gives them the authority to create; it is, in Rank's words, 'the first work of the productive individual' and remains 'their chief work'.<sup>20</sup> Vaughan did not, therefore, write a fascinating journal because he was an artist or always would become an artist; rather, his self-construction as an artist through journal-writing enabled him to become an artist and so his journal proves fascinating because it reveals the various construction processes in action. For Vaughan the journal was necessary because it provided the only space in which he could confide his thoughts and test them. Not all creative individuals write journals or diaries because they have other spaces (for instance, socially) in which to test themselves but the process of self-construction always happens before any individual can call themselves an artist; some people are artists without realizing, but those who would call themselves artists must first construct this identity. The painter Georg Eisler confirms this need to begin with ourselves as our first subject: 'We have schooled ourselves to see by acquiring the capacity to depict ourselves.'<sup>21</sup>

By analysing the processes of self-construction undertaken through journal-writing this study aims to elevate the journal and diary in the field of life-writing to the level of critical attention afforded to the autobiography. (In the context of the arguments presented in this study, there is no attempt to differentiate the journal and the diary as forms and privilege the former as the extent of restrictions many associate with the diary, imposed by either its printed format or the intentions of its author, differs from case to case.) Paul de Man suggested that autobiography, rather than being produced as a consequence of a life, 'may itself produce and determine the life' which is therefore 'governed by the technical demands of self-portraiture'<sup>22</sup>, creating a feedback loop; yet the journal or diary has been critically underserved as

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<sup>19</sup> Otto Rank, *Art and Artist: Creative Urge and Personality Development*, trans. Charles Francis Atkinson (New York, NY: Agathon Press, 1975), p.28

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Georg Eisler, *From Naked to Nude: Life Drawing in the Twentieth Century* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), p.1

<sup>22</sup> Paul De Man, 'Autobiography as De-Facement', in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp.67-81; p.69

the prime exemplar of such a loop, its revolutions being smaller, more frequent, and more available for analysis than those of conventionally defined autobiography. For too long the journal or diary's importance to its author has been regarded in terms similar to those in which James Boswell regarded his own diary: a resource to be turned to when 'remembrance' had faded.<sup>23</sup> Boswell argued for the necessity of having 'our thoughts and actions preserved in a mode not subject to change, if we would have a *fair* and distinct view of our character'<sup>24</sup> but the journal and diary are still only paid critical attention as additional (often supporting) sources and not understood as texts with their own internal structures and processes and their own literary strategies of representation. The privileging of autobiography often leads back through the genealogy linking it to Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his *Confessions* (1782-9). Rousseau's desire to be guided by 'the succession of feelings which have marked the development of my being'<sup>25</sup> marks this twelve-book text as one in which its subject, Rousseau, is continually held up for inspection. Definitions of autobiography – for instance, Roy Pascal's distinction that in 'the autobiography proper', as opposed to memoir or reminiscence, 'attention is focussed on the self'<sup>26</sup>, or Cockshut's proposition that autobiography 'naturally' lends itself to being read not as a record of fact but 'from within' by its own standards<sup>27</sup> – have helped claim Rousseau in the genealogy of autobiography and thus the form's elevation above the (in some cases literally) more everyday and allegedly less remarkable forms of the journal and diary. This study's focus on self-construction through journal-writing puts forward the argument that journals and diaries provide the very narratives of personal development that have attracted so much critical attention to autobiography and its related forms.

This study, particularly in its fourth chapter, aims to stake out further ground usually reserved for the study of autobiography (again in the vein of Rousseau) by engaging with the erotics of journal-writing. If the journal-writer is both author and subject then they are both the agent and the one who is acted upon; thus the practice of journal-writing becomes a kind of 'playing with oneself' if it must be spelt out. The repeated testing of oneself, the lingering on experiences that excite, and the tendency to fantasize or project oneself into situations makes this

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<sup>23</sup> James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.307

<sup>24</sup> James Boswell, *Boswell's Column* (London: William Kimber & Co., 1951), p.330

<sup>25</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, trans. with an introduction by J. M. Cohen (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1953), p.262

<sup>26</sup> Roy Pascal, *Design and Truth in Autobiography* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), p.5

<sup>27</sup> A. O. J. Cockshut, *The Art of Autobiography in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century England* (London: Yale University Press, 1984), p.6

writing extraordinarily potent. The indefinite nature of much journal-writing as it moves forward into an uncertain future, teetering on a precipice, makes it a practice in which each new entry has to assert the existence, agency, and potency of its subject. As Lejeune has touched upon, a fear of death lurks beneath the need to ensure that the journal or diary continues as the affirmation of the continuation of life.<sup>28</sup> Our understanding of the erotic quality of journal-writing is enriched by Bataille's understanding of eroticism, presented in his 1957 book on the subject, as 'assenting to life even in death'.<sup>29</sup> The level of disclosure, which may equate to a degree of undress or even nakedness, that a journal demands can also foster excitement in its author, meaning that the practice of journal-writing becomes a bold and liberated performance and perhaps even a display of 'psychological exhibitionism' through an 'exaggerated urge for frankness' as argued by the sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld who cites Rousseau and Frank Harris as examples.<sup>30</sup> The fourth chapter of this study certainly offers Vaughan's journal as a further example of such exhibitionism, however private.

Vaughan's journal is a large, complex, and unwieldy text. It is divided into volumes according only to the size of its constituent notebooks and not according to the themes or phases of life by which autobiographies are often divided. Nevertheless patterns emerge, themes develop, and lines of argument become apparent in the process of reading the journal. Because neither Vaughan's life nor his journal-writing can be divided neatly into phases, and because the themes and arguments through which he positions himself and constructs his identity through journal-writing overlap in chronology (especially in the wartime years, in which all of his prevailing concepts have their genesis), this study is structured so as to pull out the various threads from the fabric of the journal and follow the course of each. Vaughan himself used the term 'thread' repeatedly to refer to a productive continuity of thought: he refers to 'the threads of existence [sic] and thought' in the context of developing a 'life philosophy' (19.03.40; J2, p.177); he resolves that new philosophical outlooks are 'the threads that must be woven' in his spirit ('Sometime in March' [1941]; J5, p.19); and alludes to both the need 'to take up the threads again' (21.07.41; J6, p.39) and to a 'break in the thread' when disrupted by relocation (27.10.42; J13, p.15). In 'The Continuous and the Discontinuous', Philippe Lejeune uses the term 'thread' briefly to refer to continuities of theme but never in

<sup>28</sup> Philippe Lejeune, 'The Continuous and Discontinuous', in *On Diary*, pp.175-86; p.176

<sup>29</sup> Georges Bataille, *Eroticism*, trans. Mary Dalwood (London: Marion Boyars, 1987), p.256

<sup>30</sup> Magnus Hirschfeld, *Sexual Anomalies and Perversions: Physical and Psychological Development and Treatment* (1936); extract reprinted in *Sexology Uncensored: the Documents of Sexual Science*, ed. Lucy Bland and Laura Doan (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), p.261

the context of a methodology for studying journals or diaries and amongst a slew of metaphors encompassing everything from lacework to spider webs to sports<sup>31</sup>; this study goes further by employing a methodology of following threads to discover continuities. Chapters one to four of this study each follow a particular thread as Vaughan engages with specific issues and debates, experiments with genres and registers of writing, and constructs an aspect of his identity as a position or status. Chapters one and two cover the same period (1939-45) and in doing so interweave considerably as they address many complimentary ideas. Chapters three and four focus closer still on the emerging narratives within the journal as Vaughan begins to construct his identity. Chapter three covers the period 1940-2 while chapter four, the longest in this study, is split to cover first the year of 1943 and then the period 1962-5. The fifth and final chapter covers the self-editorship of *Journal & Drawings* and the aftermath of its publication (1965-6). Although Vaughan would continue to write in his journal until the moment of his death in 1977, there are no new threads taken up or developed further from 1965 onwards and therefore his study treats his self-construction through journal-writing as having arrested in those final years. Vaughan's descent into self-professed irrelevance, social reclusiveness, and finally ill health is of slight biographical interest but the years 1966-77 represent merely a period of stagnation that offers very little to our understanding of the journal.

Considering the limited nature of the existing bibliography on Vaughan, this study draws instead from a range of diverse supporting sources to enrich the cultural and literary contexts of Vaughan's journal-writing. Reference is made not only to critics who work on the cultures with which Vaughan came into contact (e.g. conscientious objectors, the gay male milieu, intellectual circles) but to those critics and thinkers who were writing and contributing to the debates to which Vaughan was responding in his journal. He was a voracious reader of everything from contemporary novels and philosophy to newspapers and periodicals such as *Horizon* and the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*; as such each chapter of this study refers to the writers and texts that influenced him in the periods they cover. The text of the journal is full of half-stitches left by Vaughan – allusions, quotations, reminders – and frequently draws associations, by linking certain ideas or notes in sequence within individual entries or through successive entries, that he has not yet defined or clarified. This study lays out such associations for analysis and in doing so makes explicit what often remains implicit in the journal. The self is a reasoning machine that constantly processes information; this study reconstructs

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<sup>31</sup> Lejeune, 'The Continuous and Discontinuous', pp.179-80 & pp.181-2

Vaughan's reasoning and therefore provides the clearest possible picture of his developing sense of self.

### **The Contents of this Study**

The first two chapters of this study explore how Vaughan through the practice of journal-writing positioned himself as an outsider. Given that he commenced his journal in a state of self-proclaimed crisis, this position was in many ways as defensive as it was romanticized with Vaughan constructing his identity in opposition to what he perceived as the threats of political consensus and conventional society. The first chapter, 'War and the Objector', begins by analysing the statement of conscientious objection with which Vaughan opens his first ever journal entry and how this statement develops from a political stance into a declaration of personal crisis. This chapter follows the thread of Vaughan's anti-war writing to reveal how he developed his identity as an objector not only to war but to expectations of masculinity and to the kind of political establishment (upheld by a complicit culture) that would send beautiful young men off to die for the sake of political ideology. As this chapter will make clear, Vaughan's identification with classicism as an alternative culture and aesthetic would lend prestige to his isolation in objection and lead to the consolidation of the young male figure as his life-long subject of enquiry. The second chapter, 'Society and the Observer', explains how Vaughan responded to the social differences and exclusions that he believed were preventing him from participating fully in male society. This chapter follows his accounts of failing to connect with those around him and explains how, in romanticizing his failures and dramatizing his distance from others, he justified his exclusion and ascribed himself the powerful (if lonely) role of observer. This role allowed him to indulge his sense of superiority whilst providing him with the detached and longing perspective from which he would paint the male figure.

The third and fourth chapters of this study propose that Vaughan's construction of himself as a creative individual was made possible through journal-writing and his theorization of a type in accordance with which he could construct himself; in this respect, his self-construction became less of a defensive move and more of an ambitious project. The third chapter, 'Autobiography and the Intellectual', considers his attempts to initiate an autobiographical project that

would contain his memories and experiences and transform them into a creative product. This chapter follows his literary self-education and traces the influence of writers such as T. S. Eliot and Marcel Proust on Vaughan's more experimental writing and on his increasing identification of himself as an intellectual who was now concerned with loftier existential problems. Following his eventual disillusionment with intellectual circles, the fourth chapter, 'Art and the Artist', begins with Vaughan turning back to the visual arts and overcoming his doubts as to whether he can ever become a painter by constructing through his engagements with art theory an ideal type of the artist – an individual on an indefinite search and enduring an unending struggle with himself – according to which he could then construct himself. After briefly addressing the post-war years of artistic success during which he largely neglected his journal, this chapter re-joins Vaughan in the early 1960s and reveals how he attempted in his resurgent journal-writing to address his fears of stagnation by recalibrating the ideal type of the artist as he who satisfies only himself whilst maintaining complete control over his practice.

The fifth and final chapter of this study, 'Self-editorship and 'Keith Vaughan'', considers Vaughan as the curator of his own legacy. Through careful cross-referencing of the published text with the original journal manuscripts and Vaughan's annotated typescripts this chapter examines his self-editorship of the 1966 book *Journal & Drawings*. Beginning with the evidence for Vaughan's approach to reading and revising material from the journal, this chapter interrogates the narrative of his life that he presents to the reader and how this narrative was shaped by his selections from (and edits to) the text of the original journal. Finishing with an analysis of his use of images in *Journal & Drawings*, this chapter asks what the published edition of his journal meant for the public image of 'Keith Vaughan'. This final chapter is followed by a conclusion on the subject of self-construction and the further research questions posed by the study of journals and diaries.

## Notes on the Text

The following notes apply where this study quotes directly from the original journal manuscripts:

- All page numbers are conjectural as Vaughan did not number the pages of his journal. Tate Archive staff have numbered the surrogate sheets in their collection but each sheet is a photocopy of a double-page and their numbering only applies up to and including volume thirty; due to these factors Tate's numbering has not been used. Page numbers have therefore been calculated during the research for this study to assist as best as possible future readers of Vaughan's original journal.
- All references to the original journal appear in parentheses in the following format: (DD.MM.YY; Journal volume, conjectural page number/range). For example:

Later that year he would confide in his journal, 'I am fearful of an anchorless future' (23.11.39; J2, p.21).

- If a subsequent quotation is given from the same journal entry as the quotation preceding it then only the page number/range will be given in parentheses. If a subsequent quotation is from the same page or page range of the same journal entry then there will be no additional reference in parentheses.
- Vaughan's spelling errors have been preserved and are followed by 'sic' in square brackets; exceptions whereby this annotation in brackets is not used include proper names with unconventional spellings (e.g. 'Johnie') and words deemed suitably idiosyncratic (e.g. 'peterpanish', 'unawakenedness').
- Missing words and apostrophes have been inserted in square brackets where it can be reasoned, due to their grammatical necessity, that Vaughan omitted them by accident (e.g. 'I think [I] can claim'; 'one[']s problem').

- Instances in which an educated guess has been made at an illegible word are followed by a question mark in square brackets (e.g. ‘Some experiment with Teaser [?]’).
- Square brackets have been used to identify instances in which capital letters have been changed to lower case for the purpose of embedding quotations in a sentence (e.g. ‘their purpose being ‘[s]elf survival’ (p.20)’).
- Idiosyncrasies of capitalization have been preserved (e.g. capitalizing ‘Time’ but not ‘august’).
- Instances in which Vaughan has used ‘+’ or ‘&’ instead of the word ‘and’ have been preserved.
- Instances in which Vaughan has used, or neglected, accented letters have been preserved (e.g. Vaughan’s references to ‘Cezanne’).
- Discretion has been exercised in those instances in which Vaughan’s handwriting has obscured the differentiation between commas, dashes, and full stops.
- Vaughan’s own corrections whereby he has struck through or deleted words and replaced them are shown as follows: ‘~~the eyes are~~ soft and tender eyes’.
- Vaughan’s additions to the text are marked with upward arrows as follows: ‘to kneel down ^like Raskolnikov^ and worship everything’.



**OUTSIDER**

## **1. War and the Objector**

In the summer of 1939, as Europe steeled itself for the horrors of an inevitable war, Keith Vaughan made his first ever journal entry, dated 25<sup>th</sup> August 1939, in a newly purchased notebook. This entry begins: ‘It seems to me that the only way I can go through with a war is to find something which I believe to be worth fighting [for]’ (J1, p.1). He proceeds to state that the only justifiable fight would be for ‘the abolition of war’ itself, doubting the very concept of armed conflict to be ‘a right or even effective instrument of policy’. Throughout the ensuing war, Vaughan would continue to question the motivations and the methods of the Allied forces. The anti-war writings that run as a thread of contemporary commentary through the early journals are unrelenting in their criticism of violence and flag-waving nationalism. The first section of this chapter considers why the imminence of war with Nazi Germany was the catalyst for Vaughan’s journal-writing – a practice that would become a life-long project. The second section reveals how Vaughan’s anti-war writing in his journal developed his unwavering belief in the sanctity of the human body and his resistance to its distortion or destruction for the sake of the warring nations’ competing ideologies and agendas. The third section argues that the uncompromising stance taken by Vaughan in his journal allowed him to position himself as an outsider through identification with classical ideals; in subscribing to the classically informed conflation whereby what is beautiful is morally good, he was able to advocate an alternative vision of a peaceful and (homo)sexually permissive society.

### **i. Beginning the Journal**

Vaughan’s first ever journal entry was an early experiment in constructing his personal identity – that of an objector, an outsider resisting political and social consensus – made as extraordinary circumstances seemed certain to impose upon what had been, up to that point, a very ordinary existence. He had been living a relatively sheltered life, toying with dreams of becoming an artist, when suddenly the world seemed to be erupting around him. Anticipating the rise of the curtain on a great and terrible drama, Vaughan took to the stage. Biographer Malcolm Yorke describes Vaughan’s first journal entry as ‘an argument with himself, though it was

more formally expressed than later entries – as if he were rehearsing his case before a tribunal'.<sup>1</sup> Despite his disagreement with those strict pacifists who refuse to act in any capacity to alleviate possible suffering, Vaughan makes a well-reasoned case as to why his individual involvement will not influence the speed or success of the war, reasoning that by not participating in combat he can at least 'help to reduce its ill effects' (p.2). He states his case with a confidence made possible by the 'surge of pacifism between the wars [that] resulted in the production of anti-war literature and more justifications for resisting the state'.<sup>2</sup> By making his own literary contribution, albeit privately, Vaughan places himself in the illustrious company of Aldous Huxley and George Bernard Shaw among many others. He also cites, on the second page of this first entry, *Why War?* (1939) by the philosopher C. E. M. Joad, a tract that alluded through its title to the enlightened correspondence on the same subject between Sigmund Freud and Albert Einstein. Printed on the front cover of its first edition is Joad's précis of his thesis 'that war is not something inevitable, but is the result of man-made circumstances' that man can choose to 'abolish'.<sup>3</sup> Here we find a statement that would have emboldened Vaughan to make his own argument as to why war was an ineffective and unnecessary policy that could be resisted. The advent of war provided Vaughan with the opportunity to contribute, however privately, to a debate conducted between the geographically and socially distant intelligentsia of his age.

As his first journal entry progresses, Vaughan's concerns shift from the public sphere to the private, from the threat to the wider world to the perceived threat to him personally. After stating his refusal to be coerced into combat, he asks in a sentence that constitutes its own paragraph, 'That is my resolution – shall I be able to carry it out, will the strength of my conviction survive even the first onslaught [?]' (p.4). What seems initially to be a self-dramatizing flourish is given weight by Vaughan's sincerely expressed fears of exclusion and even persecution. In the two subsequent paragraphs, spanning the next four pages, he argues that war, 'a situation which demands physical bravery' (p.6), will provide the conditions for him to be conclusively ostracized from society. 'I am afraid of physical pain', he confesses, 'and have been, more than of anything else' (pp.4-5). Vaughan's concern is that he does not adhere to society's conventional, preferred image of masculinity. He and his younger brother would have been exposed to such an image throughout

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<sup>1</sup> Yorke, p.53

<sup>2</sup> Rachel Barker, *Conscience, Government and War: Conscientious Objection in Great Britain 1939-45* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), p.3

<sup>3</sup> C. E. M. Joad, *Why War?* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1939)

the 1930s; adventure films with wartime or colonial settings were hugely popular and commercially successful, while adventure stories modelled their heroes on the bombastic T. E. Lawrence (a figure who Vaughan would continually berate throughout his journal).<sup>4</sup> Vaughan discusses the veneration by society of 'physical courage', contrasting the celebrated 'brave man' and his antithesis: the 'coward' (p.5). The implication is that by fearing physical pain he must, by society's crude process of elimination, be a coward. As George L. Mosse stresses, the positive masculine stereotype predominant in this period relied upon the existence of a 'negative stereotype' that 'failed to measure up' and that projected an image 'the exact opposite of true masculinity'.<sup>5</sup> Vaughan feared that war would prove the final exposé of one's deficiencies as a man: 'the coward is loathsome, despicable, and unfit for human society – It is of course on this thesis that the whole scale of heroes and great men is built up' (p.6). War demands heroes, and he can never be one in the eyes of society. Of course Vaughan attacks such a conventional image of masculinity, criticizing how 'physical courage should be considered a requisite in every man' and wondering why it is not more noble to possess 'moral and spiritual courage, the capacity to maintain and carry out what you believe to be right and worthwhile, in the face of all opposition, and at the cost of complete ostracism and loneliness' (pp.7-8). In his first journal entry he rejects not only war but the image of masculinity that it demands and reinforces, perceiving its celebration of brute physical force to be antithetical to more enlightened values.

Vaughan's first journal entry turns from a consideration of impending global crisis to an admission of personal crisis, a drama of the self in which society has cast him, wrongly, as a figure deserving of ridicule and even hatred. He defends himself in confident terms: 'I think [I] can claim to possess a degree of moral courage superior to the average man' (p.8). He claims to aspire to more learned ideals 'in spite of the prevailing standards and values of the society in which I find myself'. The consequences of having taken such a stance are made clear in stark terms: 'As a result I find myself now in my twenty-seventh year, quite alone, with no very great liking for life, with no principles or working ethic to follow' (p.9). Given that his first journal entry concludes, far from its initial anti-war argument, with a deeply personal confession of loneliness and of desire for romantic love ('I want more than anything else someone whom I can love and trust'; p.13) we must now consider

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture 1850-2000* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), p.171

<sup>5</sup> George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: the Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.6

Vaughan's rejection of conventional masculinity, his rejection of 'the average man', in terms of his homosexuality.

Vaughan's first journal entry develops from an anti-war argument to an attack on expectations of masculinity and eventually an admission of fear: his fear of living ostracized and loveless. The progression of this piece, likely long-deliberated if we consider the care taken with its structure of argument, suggests a search for identity – implicitly a homosexual identity. We recognize this need to search as the kind of crisis that initiates a journal-writing project. John Marshall provides evidence for the argument that, during the 1930s in Britain, 'it was difficult or impossible for many people with homosexual feelings to conceptualize themselves as being 'homosexual''.<sup>6</sup> Julian Symons may have since described the 1930s as 'the homosexual decade', in which 'homosexuality became accepted as a personal idiosyncrasy', but as the son of the dandyish writer A. J. A. Symons he was moving in very exclusive circles.<sup>7</sup> Prior to 1939 'Vaughan began to seek out other homosexuals who had already established their own defensive networks and sanctuaries in London' but what records we have of this pre-war search suggest it was largely fruitless.<sup>8</sup> There was no visible or readily accessible contemporary identity with which homosexual men in 1930s Britain could identify; the scandal surrounding the Oscar Wilde trial forty years earlier had been the catalyst for the creation of a homosexual archetype in the public imagination<sup>9</sup> which had not been revised or replaced. Entrapping an unwitting student for the purpose of a smear campaign against conscientious objectors, journalists from the *Daily Express* plied young Cecil Davies with drinks and photographed him, cigarette in hand, as 'a debonair young man' posed by a great mantelpiece, evoking the Wildean fop in order to suggest links between objection and a deviant, degenerate rejection of conventional masculinity.<sup>10</sup> Judging from the hateful reaction from the public to these images of Davies, the Wildean archetype was still a cultural shorthand for homosexuality and its attendant subversions in 1930s Britain. Returning to Yorke's impression of Vaughan's first journal entry, which seems 'as if he were rehearsing his case before a tribunal', we appreciate that Vaughan was adopting the only

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<sup>6</sup> John Marshall, 'Pansies, Perverts and Macho Men: Changing Conceptions of Male Homosexuality', in *The Making of the Modern Homosexual*, ed. Kenneth Plummer (London: Hutchinson, 1981), pp.133-54; p.133

<sup>7</sup> Julian Symons, *The Thirties: a Dream Revolved* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), p.40

<sup>8</sup> Yorke, p.49

<sup>9</sup> Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, vol. 2: *Sexual Inversion* (New York, NY: Random House, 1936), p.392

<sup>10</sup> Felicity Goodall, *A Question of Conscience: Conscientious Objection in the Two World Wars* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1997), p.89

position he knew for a modern, literate homosexual man: that of the Wildean pariah on trial. By objecting so strongly to the policy of war itself regardless of circumstance, Vaughan seems to have been queering his identity simply by adopting a position of defiance against the dominant political and social consensus (in this case the widespread advocacy of war). Jeffrey Weeks asserts that:

the ideological discourses that establish the categories of sexual perversity address particular types of persons. They also, as Foucault suggest [*sic*], create the possibility of reversals within the discourses: where there is power, there is resistance. Foucault is here offering a space for the self-creation of a homosexual identity [...]<sup>11</sup>

By linking his conscientious objection and his rejection of conventional masculinity model Vaughan opened such a space in which to begin constructing his identity as a homosexual man.

Towards the end of his first ever journal entry Vaughan laments that, ‘The danger of a too open mind is that a crisis catches you without an anchorage’ (p.11). Later that year he would confide in his journal, ‘I am fearful of an anchorless future’ (23.11.39; J2, p.21). As an artistically inclined, sensitive young man unable to identify with an available homosexual identity Vaughan was anxious of being cut adrift. The oppressions of his home and professional life up to that point were replete with the pressures of heteronormativity. His job at advertising firm Lintas was figured as an unhappy marriage, with Vaughan reprimanding himself for ‘the cowlike docility with which I had hung on there for eight years doing just enough to keep my presence tolerable to them and wasting myself [...] lacking the courage to break away’ (04.11.39; J2, p.8). His advertising work bears many a mark of frustration and disillusion; mock-up advertisements for Persil detergent featuring captioned cartoons in which parents browbeat their children and housewives cower in tears from stern husbands seem to cast aspersions on the happy heterosexual household.<sup>12</sup> In his own family home, Vaughan had been subjected to stifling demands, his adolescence spent in the company of his ‘tiny, energetic, dominating’ mother and his brother Dick who was five years his junior.<sup>13</sup> Given Dick’s nervy, unhappy disposition as a boy, Vaughan found himself in the role of surrogate father; he admits in a later journal entry to having to fulfil ‘the position of father as well as brother’ (15.08.40; J4, p.43). Queer critic Sara Ahmed writes, often from personal experience, on the problem of domestic pressures impeding homosexual identity

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<sup>11</sup> Jeffrey Weeks, ‘Discourse, Desire and Sexual Deviance: some Problems in a History of Homosexuality’, in *The Making of the Modern Homosexual*, ed. Kenneth Plummer, pp.76-111; p.107

<sup>12</sup> ‘Advertising Work’ held at Tate Archive, London, catalogue ref: TGA9013/2, 1 folder.

<sup>13</sup> Alan Ross, p.vii

formation. Ahmed asserts that “the family home” seems so full of traces of heterosexual intimacy that it is hard to take up my place without feeling those traces as points of pressure’.<sup>14</sup> During his periods of leave (once the war had commenced and he was working for the St John Ambulance service) Vaughan hated returning to the family home; he dreaded his old room with ‘its thousand ties with memory’ and the spectacle of his mother’s ‘frail pitiful unhappiness – shaken by worrying wanting me back’ (23.11.39; J2, p.21). In this stifling environment, bearing witness to his mother’s unhappiness drains Vaughan of all creative and sexual energy, reducing him ‘to an impotent misery’ (27.11.39; J2, p.23). Feeling himself unable to progress in life with his mother’s constant demands, Vaughan writes, ‘I feel that every man has this duty to himself – that he should establish his own integrity – and it is prior to most but not all duties to other people’. The anti-war position taken in Vaughan’s first ever journal entry presented such an opportunity to assert his own integrity away from familial responsibilities.

Following his brother’s death in an aircraft crash while on active service in the R.A.F. the pressure piled on Vaughan by his mother became unbearable. On her birthday, only two days after receiving the news of Dick’s death, Vaughan writes of her being ravaged by grief, ‘done with life’ (24.06.40; J3, p.161). He reflects on now being her only son, her only reason for continued existence: ‘Success, marriage, children, all these which I know I can never give her, yet must pretend somehow to attempt. By all the laws of reason it would be better if she were dead’ (p.162). Ahmed explains the weight of such expectations: ‘Heterosexuality is imagined as the future of the child insofar as heterosexuality is idealized as a social gift and even as the gift of life itself.’ Describing this ‘gift’ as an inheritance, Ahmed continues, ‘Heterosexuality becomes a social as well as familial inheritance through the endless requirement that the child repay the debt of life with its life.’<sup>15</sup> Vaughan considers two possible outcomes in the journal entry dated 24<sup>th</sup> June 1940: staying true to himself and his sexuality (and disappointing his mother); or trying to adapt himself to meet her, and society’s, demands (and inevitably failing). Considering the etymological discussion in which Ahmed equates being ‘in line’ with being ‘direct’ and ‘being straight’<sup>16</sup>, we can read the anti-war declaration in Vaughan’s first journal entry that ‘I cannot align myself along with the rest of my people’ (p.1) as a

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<sup>14</sup> Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), p.11

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p.86

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp.15-6

phenomenological recognition, whether intentional or unconsciously informed, of his irreconcilable differences with heteronormative society.

Beginning his journal as war with Nazi Germany became inevitable, Vaughan declared his opposition to war as policy and produced an argument emboldened by contemporary pacifist writing. Despite the confidence of this argument, his first ever journal entry reveals his personal vulnerability by articulating his sincerely expressed anxiety that he would be completely ostracized from society for failing to comply with a misguided model of conventional masculinity. Implicit in this anxiety was Vaughan's belief that his position in society was already precarious and that, consequently, his desire for a personally edifying and socially acceptable homosexual identity was urgent. Despite evoking the outdated Wildean archetype of the persecuted man on trial, Vaughan opened the space required to construct his identity simply through the act of opposing political and social consensus through objection. By declaring such opposition in writing, no matter how privately, Vaughan had opened a space separate from the stifling professional and home lives that were replete with heteronormative pressures. Remarkably, Vaughan's first journal entry establishes the tone for the next thirty-eight years of life-writing, casting him as an outsider figure struggling to assert himself in a troubled and often hostile world.

## **ii. Defending the Body**

The wartime volumes of Vaughan's journal contain many passionate and persuasive pages of anti-war writing. They also contain many instances in which he questions the motivations for his conscientious objection and doubts the strength of his moral convictions. The following two journal entries provide examples that differ in their approach to such questioning but evidence the same conclusion: that Vaughan could not easily align himself with a readily available moral argument – that is, one informed by dominant religious or political discourses – because his objection was founded not on doctrine or ideology but on his empathy for the human body amidst the reality of its destruction across Europe. This empathy developed through Vaughan's journal-writing into a defence of the human body, an argument for its unnegotiable sanctity, in the face of the warring forces that would willingly sacrifice it. The first example is an early journal entry that begins with Vaughan's



disillusionment at having failed to develop a romantic relationship with an ambulance colleague with whom he is infatuated. Vaughan declares that he is 'less and less convinced' by his stand as a conscientious objector before noting, 'I am very sick of my vacillation and inconsistency' (21.02.40; J2, p.92). He seems irritable and dismissive and continues this entry by claiming that, 'It was fear and not morality which fetched me up here at St Johns [...] but being here it is easy to pretend it was for reasons of pacifism and humanity' (pp.93-4). Despite Vaughan's undermining of his previous anti-war protestations, it is evident that the dismissal of his moral stance in this entry is linked to his lack of contact with the human body. Having been playfully dismissed by his colleague, Vaughan by extension feels the absence of the physical, bodily reality of his fellow man; as a result the prospect of war itself seems distant, 'a deadening and boring threat, not reality yet' (p.94). In the second example, an entry dated a few months later, he is less dismissive and more insistent on his profound discomfort with, and unsuitability for, ambulance work. He had written previously on seeking a route out of medical duty and, remarkably, had even contemplated joining the RAF, although this was addressed very briefly in writing and therefore cannot be taken too seriously (04.04.40; J3, p.2). In this later entry, Vaughan reflects on his decision to sign up for medical service and writes, 'I was forcing myself to a moral standing which I do not very passionately uphold. I am not an especially moral person.' (06.06.40; J3, p.125) This passage reveals his concern for what can be considered a 'moral' course of action, for he uses the word seven times over the course of two pages. He supposes that he chose medical service 'originally as offering the best solution to a necessary evil', yet whilst he 'cannot object to medical service in this war' he claims to be 'strongly averse and unsuited for it'. Interestingly, he uses similar language when describing his objection to the war in general: 'the primary undeniable reason for my not wanting to fight is that I dislike the idea, and feel myself completely unsuited ever to do so.' (p.126) While this statement may, at first glance, seem to support the possible accusations of cowardice that Vaughan believed he would face, its relationship to his prior claim of being 'unsuited' to ambulance work invites us to consider his realization that both medical service and armed conflict alike expose participants to an intolerable situation: bearing witness to the reality of war as bodily injury and destruction.

Vaughan had already borne witness to the reality of bodily injury during his ambulance work and recorded his reactions in his journal. While preparing for his employment in the service of St John Ambulance he is perturbed by 'reading about severed arteries, fractured femurs, dislocated shoulders in the aloof impersonal prose of first aid', finding the thought of it 'sordid and horrible' (05.09.39; J1, pp.30-

1). Having attended the injured in his capacity as an ambulance volunteer, he reflects on 'kneeling over these prone male bodies, feeling their bones and hollows, so dispassionately, slightly revolted by their coarse masculinity' (13.10.39; J1, p.59). Here the damaged, often incomplete body is a matter of impropriety, its aspect coarse and its dignity called into question. In a discussion on types of violence, Robert L. Holmes agrees that some violence 'has a closer kinship with the notion of violation than with physical force [...] something having value, integrity, dignity, sacredness, or generally some claim to respect is treated in a manner that is contemptuous of this claim'.<sup>17</sup> While the injuries Vaughan witnessed with the ambulance service did not involve combatants, the first-hand experience of injury informed his sense of violence in the context of war being the wilful destruction of the body and the values that it represented. As Elaine Scarry argues: 'Whether a boy announces that he is going off "to die" for his country or going off "to kill" for his country, he is saying that he is going off "to alter body tissue" (either his own or another's)'.<sup>18</sup> Some months later, under the heading 'Transportation of War Casualties', Vaughan records in his journal his response to aiding a young man with terrible injuries to both arms: 'I was ashamed to look at him, knowing I had to hurt him.' (20.06.40; J3, p.151) Recalling in a later entry his attendance of a ten-year-old crash victim with extensive injuries, Vaughan describes feeling drained by his empathy for the boy: 'Why could I not take my eyes off him all that journey and afterwards in the surgery [...] absorbing into myself the agony of his body [...] so that I felt bruised and wretched all the rest of that day.' (05.08.40; J3, p.275) He is only able to look because the boy is so traumatized as to be barely conscious of his own pain; ordinarily, he confesses to having 'to look away' from those in pain and to relying entirely on 'the self control of the patient' (p.276). In both entries, the spectacle of another body in pain is presented as intolerable as it confirms the reality of physical injury.

Vaughan's anti-war writings are at their most persuasive when he addresses the injured body in pain. Early in his journal he argues that the fight for the alleged ideals of freedom and democracy is a 'senseless blackmail of human flesh' (11.11.39; J2, p.11). He understands the methods and cost of war in the same terms as Scarry would elaborate upon decades later: war is a contest to *out-injure* the enemy, and 'injury is war's product and its cost. It is the goal toward which all activity is directed

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<sup>17</sup> Robert L. Holmes, *On War and Morality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), p.43

<sup>18</sup> Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: the Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p.81

and the road to the goal'.<sup>19</sup> In an especially passionate tract in his journal, Vaughan states, 'There is no greater evil to my mind than pain [...] I cannot justify wilfully inflicted pain on any grounds [...] Pain is the only thing that has the power [...] to take from a man his manhood' (05.07.40; J3, p.200). In specifying that pain is emasculating, he subverts the idea that war is the arena in which heroic masculinity triumphs as the reality of pain is unavoidable. He continues, 'At a certain intensity of pain he will certainly be broken', underlining that war's business is primarily the destruction (or, at the very least, the complete immobilization) of the body (p.201). He proceeds to quote at length across a whole page of his journal from a contemporary account of wartime combat that presents in heroic terms a kill-or-be-killed situation. He asks, 'Why could there not be a point where men suddenly realized the whole thing was unnecessary. They were not defending themselves against something supernatural, or beyond their control' (p.202). Here Vaughan argues that the mutual recognition by opposing combatants of each other's physical presence should be enough for them to identify with their targets as fellow human beings, fellow human bodies, instead of as vessels for the abstract ideologies that they have sworn to fight against. He cites the famous Christmas ceasefire of 1914 as an example of such identification prevailing. The same journal entry proceeds to mock the absurd etiquette of war, something Vaughan scoffs at as 'British sportsmanship' (p.204). 'It's all right to burn a man's face off with a flame thrower (nasty yes, mais c'est la guerre)', he quips, 'but don't let him see you adjusting the nozzle.' After this flippant, if gruesome, example he extends his critique of wartime etiquette to that 'which allows the British to commit any and every of the vilest atrocities against young men and boys provided they are in a certain suit of clothes' but that then assumes the moral high ground when protecting refugees (read 'women and children'). On these grounds Vaughan takes issue with war as a campaign specifically against the male body in which young men are offered up for destruction as the price for the abstract values and ideologies being fought for.

The profligacy of war in its wasting of young male bodies is the moral argument that appeals most strongly to Vaughan. He figures the sight of ambulances in convoy as a 'procession like a funeral, carrying their burden of broken youth' (20.06.40; J3, p.152). He ruminates on wartime as a period '[w]hen youth is the password to agony. Bodies because they are young must be racked and broken, branded with horror and agony that will live on and on long after you have forgotten those awful days during the war.' (13.07.40; J3, p.215) In such instances the literary

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp.80-1

elaboration upon these broken bodies, the lurid linguistic excess he employs, effectively conveys the lurid reality and excessiveness of war's methods and effects. One journal entry begins by quoting a short paragraph from that day's *News Chronicle* on the subject of Norwegian territorials and militiamen delaying the Germans long enough to allow their monarchy to flee. Vaughan rails against the consensus that:

it is a fact of which to be proud, that is supposed in some sense to reflect credit on us that young boys fresh and untainted and unhardened to war are stood up all but defenceless before the steel and fire of German machinery and systematically mown down in order that the Norwegian king and ministers should the more comfortably be able to scuttle to a place of safety. (03.05.40; J3, p.77)

His choice of adjectives in this passage stresses the overwhelming force of mechanized weaponry in contrast to young, vulnerable bodies. Rather than believing that such casualties consist of heroes wilfully sacrificing themselves for lofty ideals, Vaughan understands the reality that many, if not all, of those young men were deceived into offering up their bodies in an unfair exchange. Holmes argues that 'those *most* responsible for wars are usually least involved in the actual killing [...] Those who do the actual killing have little say in the overall enterprise in which they are engaged'; he clarifies that the combatants 'are usually young conscripts who have no part in decision making and little grasp of the issues over which they are asked to fight. Frequently they are lied to by their governments.'<sup>20</sup> Vaughan understood such a state of affairs even before the official outbreak of war, commenting in his journal on the exploitative allure of military service: 'The feeling of being necessary [...] and so easy – so absurdly easy – just call at the office, write your particulars, and sign on the dotted line, and in a twinkling you're somebody – instead of nobody – the diabolical deception of war.' (30.08.39; J1, pp.18-9) We therefore understand Vaughan's construction through journal-writing of his identity as an objector to be an act of anti-war protest in its demonstration of an alternative means by which a 'nobody' becomes a 'somebody'.

Journal-writing during wartime provided Vaughan with the opportunity to articulate and develop his objection to a political establishment that willingly exposed young male bodies to injury and destruction to further their agenda. He frequently portrays establishment figures as greedy and manipulative yet also grossly incompetent. He records his disbelief that Britain's leaders, specifically Neville Chamberlain, have failed to foresee and avert the impending slaughter of

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<sup>20</sup> Holmes, pp.185-6

millions (02.02.40; J2, pp.61-4). While 'the Governments have locked themselves in' so as to weigh up the prospect of war, Vaughan suggests that the public have been purposely fatigued by waiting and tension, becoming 'resigned – almost cheerful – 'I think we're going to have a slap at him this time" (30.08.39; J1, p.14). Having visited the cinema Vaughan scoffs at a propaganda film, *The Lion has Wings* (1939), describing it as 'maddening to one who refuses to be drawn by its bait' (01.12.39; J2, p.29). He continues this journal entry by highlighting slum conditions and the huge inequality that has been allowed to develop in British society. 'I would so like to believe that this war is only what we're told', he comments conspiratorially before adding a dialogic element through the repeated use of 'yes' to signal his own ripostes to claims made by the aforementioned propaganda film: 'England hates war and loves only peace, yes but peace to sit tight on her money bags and enjoy the luxury of exploiting others.' (p.30) Vaughan positions himself outside of political consensus by suggesting that war is not absolutely necessary but instead preferable for the British establishment's attempts to maintain the status quo and protect their status as an imperial superpower. In this respect, Vaughan's view on armed conflict recalls Carl von Clausewitz's famous dictum, 'War is nothing but the continuation of politics with other means'<sup>21</sup>. Vaughan entertains the argument that Hitler's aim is partly that of breaking 'the paralyzed [*sic*] stranglehold of the British Empire' and suggests that it is 'silly to dismiss it out of hand' (07.04.40; J3, p.20). He continues this entry by expressing his suspicions regarding 'our omission to state any tangibly formulated war aims' before rounding again on Britain's imperial status: 'So much of our precious freedom and prosperity is based on and made possibly [*sic*] only by the falsely acquired wealth we enjoy' (pp.20-1).

Vaughan's disdain for the political manoeuvres steering the war extends beyond the interests of Britain when he lambasts 'the same stupid arrogance' of other European nations (09.07.40; J3, p.211). His distrust of the competing political ideologies represented by the warring nations reflected the views of many contemporary commentators. Reviewing Malcolm Muggeridge's *The Thirties*, a damning indictment of the decade just passed, George Orwell could not help but second its downbeat message: 'It is an age in which every *positive* attitude has turned out a failure. Creeds, parties, programmes of every description have simply flopped, one after another. The only 'ism' that has justified itself is pessimism.'<sup>22</sup> A journal entry written years later as the war ground on consolidates Vaughan's

<sup>21</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp.69-70

<sup>22</sup> George Orwell, 'The Limit to Pessimism', in *New English Weekly*, no.17, 25<sup>th</sup> April 1940, p.5

distrust of the Allied nations' motivations. He believes that the Allied leaders see war as 'the only way of keeping afloat the existing social set up', while Allied soldiers are largely well-intentioned but naive and animalistically unthinking (29.02.44; J19, p.18). Vaughan puts Churchill and Hitler in the same despotic bracket, arguing that 'they have an innate desire to lead – being unable to share or cooperate'. He decides that '[t]he Russians are fighting for the sanest of all reasons – to expel a destructive invader' while the Germans 'are the next most reasonable', their purpose being '[s]elf survival' (p.20). Interestingly, Vaughan's belief in Russia's greater justification for fighting (based purely on an immediate and unavoidable threat) exhibits nothing of the ideological support for 'communism and its Russian manifestations' that characterized the outlook of the period's leftist intellectuals.<sup>23</sup> Thoroughly distrustful of competing political ideologies, he concludes that '[t]he Allies are bound to loose [sic] morally and spiritually as surely as they will win militarily'.

Writing of the public's complicity in the war effort allowed Vaughan to emphasize his outsider status as an informed objector. Mocking the ease with which the public have accepted their lot, he remarks how 'they stand and watch and discuss the merits of different types of explosive and anti-explosive of protection from direct hits and shrapnel as though they were already familiar with these things' (30.08.39; J1, pp.15-6). In another entry he observes that, 'People carry gas masks about today [...] with the same accepted complacency that they would umbrellas or mackintoshes'; he claims not to carry his own gas mask 'partly because it is cumbersome and partly as a gesture that I have not yet relinquished all aspects of sanity' – although he is self-aware enough to reflect that 'both reasons are a little mawkish and puerile' (04.10.39; J1, pp.54-5). In every instance where Vaughan records his disbelief of public opinion there is an element of condescension that aggrandizes his own more discerning perspective. Despite admitting 'the intense emotional battering' administered by a 'news film' before describing one particular barrage of scenes of images, he rallies to coolly comment, 'Propaganda of course, but I despair of men who can be mislead [sic] so so simply' (09.07.40; J3, pp.209-10). While there were writers and commentators who did critique wartime propaganda (see, for example, Graham Greene's 'Men at Work', a satire of propaganda and British bureaucrats)<sup>24</sup>, Vaughan consistently emphasizes the singularity of his incredulous position. A mid-war journal entry that considers the rise of Nazism

<sup>23</sup> A. Kingsley Weatherhead, *Stephen Spender and the Thirties* (London: Associated University Presses, 1975), pp.38-41

<sup>24</sup> Graham Greene, 'Men at Work', in *Penguin New Writing*, no.9, 1941, pp.18-24

illustrates how his conceptualization of the credulous masses developed in his writing. He adds an interesting inflection to his anti-violent credo by claiming that ‘those who lack even the energy to be violent’ are equally ‘sick’, for it is their acquiescence that allows the rise of such oppressive doctrines as Nazism (12.08.42; J13, p.1). He invokes Freudian theories of repression by branding those who are acquiescent as ‘those buried deep beneath the slagheap of accumulated unacted desires’, implying that self-denial and sexual conservatism translates into political conservatism. He blasts ‘the organically weak, the flawed, the neurotic, who cannot support the burden of personality [...] Who need the leader, the ‘we’ consciousness, the freedom of self annihilation in the group’. Given that Vaughan seems to position acquiescence to Nazism as the antithesis of awakened, desiring individualism, his words here act as a coded call for sexual liberation as a corrective for the repressed societies that produce oppressive regimes.

Vaughan’s denial of the necessity of war was supported by his written considerations of the last war to engulf Europe. In an early entry dated Remembrance Sunday, he reflects on the perversity of celebrating the sacrifices of First World War soldiers when the next generation are being packed off to another war, a generation of ‘those for whom the world was to be worthy and just’ (11.11.39; J2, p.10). The following summer, he begins a journal entry by prophesying the destruction to come from an aerial bombardment: ‘It may be tonight, it may be some other night that death and agony will suddenly rain down breaking the bodies of men about the pavements and wrapping their flesh round lamposts [*sic*]’ (05.07.40; J3, p.193). Framing the entry in this way he achieves a contrast between the bodily reality of injured human viscera, conveyed again through his deliberately lurid linguistic excess, and the more detached account of war by Sir Edward Spears in *Prelude to Victory* (1939) which he proceeds to critique. Vaughan comments on the author’s familiarity with ‘all the intrigues and muddle and selfish pettiness in the High Command’, his familiarity with ‘the men who sit behind maps and talk and plan and argue endlessly playing their games with the bodies of men’ (p.194). Vaughan cannot understand such cool assessments of spiralling casualties and overcrowded hospitals (p.195). He quotes Spears when taking issue with his desire to see prisoners of war as raucous and unreasonable creatures rather than pathetic, broken men (pp.195-6). Crucially, Vaughan finds in Spears’s account the evidence with which to skewer the ingrained British mindset regarding armed conflict; he takes issue with the ‘picturesque analogy’ of the opposing armies, prepared at the start of 1917 for what they believed to be one final effort, being ‘like two teams in a tug of war’ (p.197). He asserts that Spears is not being consciously facetious but is

instead betraying his very British belief that the sporting analogy is justified, ‘that in each of these activities similar qualities of aggressive, stubborn, enduring, physical courage manliness are expressed’. He finds in Spears the confirmation of a representation he would have been familiar with from childhood; serials and stories in such publications as *Boys Own Paper*, *Chums* and *Champion* indulged their young readers with patriotic fiction and illustrations in which the First World War ‘was always portrayed as righteous, justified, and in most cases, heroic, exciting and romantic’<sup>25</sup>. Vaughan ends this passage on Spears by asking why it is noble to create or be complicit in a ‘manmade hell’ all ‘for the sake of hypothetical good in the future’ (p.198).

Vaughan evidently found a truth about the specious, speculative aims of armed conflict in this phrase ‘hypothetical good’, for its use in the passage on Spears is a re-iteration of a view expressed in an earlier entry: ‘There is no hope for man unless he ceases to think of the good of Man. There is no hope unless he stops doing evident, tangible and immediate evil for the deferred hypothetical general good.’ (07.04.40; J3, p.18) This earlier entry similarly contains Vaughan’s responses to a work of history: in this case Gerhardt’s book *The Romanovs* (1940). He supports his own stance against violence enacted for ideological ends by agreeing with Gerhardt’s words on how it is unjustifiable ‘to reinforce one’s judgement by thrusting hard steel into the delicate and complicated human organism, for the sake of solidarity of opinion as to the mere machinery of the political future’ (p.17). He summarizes the historian’s argument by stating that ‘Gerhardt is a humanist and attaches the highest value to the individual, above ideologies, movements, national destinies’ (pp.18-9). By recording his responses to such texts in his journal Vaughan was strengthening his case as an objector by establishing a more holistic view of history from which war is seen as an endlessly repeated pattern of mass sacrifice for political purposes. *The Decline of the West* by Oswald Spengler, first published in English in 1926 and cited and discussed many times in his journal, exerted a considerable influence over Vaughan’s understanding of Western history as patterned and often cyclical. He begins an entry by announcing, ‘March and Spring and the curtain ready to rise on the last act of the Decline of the West’ (08.03.40; J2, p.112). His use of a theatrical metaphor suggests that he subscribes to Spengler’s historical model of well-rehearsed inevitabilities, one that the historian communicated largely through generalizations and predictions. Vaughan may have found affirmation of his own vision of the British Empire as a crumbling edifice in

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<sup>25</sup> Paris, p.151



Spengler's figuring of 'civilisation' as 'a conclusion, the thing-become succeeding the thing-becoming, death following life, rigidity following expansion'<sup>26</sup>. Throughout the wartime volumes of his journal Vaughan considers the conflict across Europe and beyond to be the final undoing of all the progress made by human civilization. In this respect, he was also tapping into the intellectual current that had run through the 1930s; Samuel Hynes argues that many commentators during the 'phoney war' period of delay during the autumn and winter of 1939 were morosely impatient for 'the end that had been predicted with such grim certainty through the 'thirties'.<sup>27</sup> In his memoir *The Thirties and After*, Stephen Spender described the decade's fatalism as follows: 'With the ending of the Spanish Civil War it became clear that the thirties were being wound up like a company going into bankruptcy.'<sup>28</sup> We find the influence of such thinking when Vaughan ruminates on war-torn Spain and the potential loss of its rich cultural heritage as an example of European civilization falling into an irreversible decline (06.06.40; J3, pp.128-9).

While it was a matter of liberal consensus to mourn for Spain's plight, it was quite another thing to extend one's sympathies for a fallen culture to Germany as Vaughan did. Clearly emboldened by his own claims to a holistic historical viewpoint, Vaughan expresses pity for the German people as victims of a sadly inevitable fall by concurring with Spender's sympathetic portrayal in the recently serialized 'September Journal' (1940). Spender was a reliable witness, having won Vaughan's admiration and trust by defining a pacifist as one who 'simply puts himself voluntarily outside politics' (21.02.40; J2, p.93). In 1937, by way of response to the call for literary engagement with politics, Spender had argued that the poet 'is not dealing with absolute truths or a dialectic, he is dealing with reality and establishing a significance of his emotional reactions to reality'.<sup>29</sup> Vaughan writes wistfully, 'I often go back again to reading Spender's September Journal. It is terrible and sad to read about those days of Weimar freedom' (13.07.40; J3, p.216). He believes Spender's perspective on the German people to be valuable yet neglected, remarking that the poet 'says things about the Germans which I have always known and cannot forget, but which no one mentions anymore'. Petra Rau explains the '*necessity* of the German other for the *construction* of Englishness'

<sup>26</sup> Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, an abridged edition by Helmut Werner, English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps, trans. Charles Francis Atkinson (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961), p.48

<sup>27</sup> Samuel Hynes, *The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s* (London: The Bodley Head, 1976), p.381

<sup>28</sup> Stephen Spender, *The Thirties and After: Poetry, Politics, People (1933-75)* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1978), p.85

<sup>29</sup> Stephen Spender, 'Poetry', in *Fact*, no.4, July 1937, p.25

during the early twentieth century, a rhetoric of representation 'based on a denial of familiarity, a literal 'making strange' of potentially too intimate cultural affinities'.<sup>30</sup> There had been a tendency amongst 'the great majority of liberals' to view the Germans as 'a deeply-wronged people whose claims to a revision of the Treaty of Versailles were deserving of unstinted support', but from 1937 this tendency dissipated with attitudes towards Germany becoming 'militant rather than appeasing'.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless in this entry we find Vaughan underlining his credentials as an informed objector, having neither a fickle temperament nor a conveniently short memory. He emphasizes the tragedy that murderous regiments have emerged from a country notable for its 'sentimental people' and agrees with Spender on how peace had previously been for the German people a 'positive, living, creative thing' (in contrast, he notes, to the English and French who regard peace as 'a negative state'). Vaughan acknowledges an element of wishful thinking but is nevertheless moved to fondly recollect his own experiences when visiting Austria in 1930 of 'bands of mountaineering youths who would cheerfully wave' and of the openheartedness of his hosts (pp.218-9). The storybook quality of these scenes offers the literary means by which Vaughan can convey his belief in the innocence of this bygone place and time in relation to the present.

In extending his sympathies to the German people for the 'fearful treachery' that has befallen them (p.217), Vaughan continues to develop through journal-writing the role of objector as a humanitarian who recognizes people regardless of national borders or political lines. Vaughan also developed an argument that individuals could not be held responsible for actions impelled by greater forces. Susan Sontag writes:

one person's "barbarian" is another person's "just doing what everybody else is doing." (How many can be expected to do better than that?) The question is, Whom do we wish to blame? More precisely, Whom do we believe we have the right to blame?<sup>32</sup>

We find in the later wartime volumes of Vaughan's journal a similar line of questioning. Having been affected greatly by a film in which a village was machine-gunned from the air, Vaughan imagines a sequence of horrific repercussions for the villagers by focussing specifically on bodily injury (01.06.44; J21, pp.21-2). He imagines a boy who is injured so severely that he is never able to play a musical

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<sup>30</sup> Petra Rau, *English Modernism, National Identity and the Germans, 1890-1950* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p.10

<sup>31</sup> Michael Howard, *War and the Liberal Consciousness* (London: Temple Smith, 1978), p.97 & p.106

<sup>32</sup> Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), pp.92-3

instrument again. He imagines a mother cradling the lifeless body of her child. Struggling to decide who can be held accountable for such crimes, he considers the pilots of the aircraft involved and mounts a defence of them based on the ‘thrill of flying a plane’ and the powerful sense of destiny propelling them (‘The sense of danger and responsibility. The moment when the fatherland relies on you.’; p.22). Having somewhat absolved the pilots themselves he considers whether the ‘planners’ are responsible and again reasons that they were acting out a prescribed narrative divorced from the bodily reality of its consequences (p.23). Understanding the reality of the body is vital to Vaughan’s argument: the injuries to the villagers’ bodies are real; the pilots’ actions are motivated by a tangibly real thrill; yet the pilots, like the ‘planners’, are propelled by an unreal, illusory purpose. Put simply, the body is real while ideological motivation is not. Vaughan argues that there is only one conclusion: ‘War is responsible.’ In reaching this ostensibly simple conclusion Vaughan objects to war as an abstract idea that denies humanity – and humanity is only ever something embodied.

### **iii. Believing in Beauty**

With war threatening the destruction of the young male body across Europe, Vaughan’s journal-writing transported him back to a distant pre-war paradise where the male body shone with a perfect, sadly irretrievable clarity. He begins an extensive and significant journal entry by despairing, ‘Nothing that matters, nothing that is worth anything will survive this war [...] unfortunately there is no future’ (06.02.40; J2, pp.67-8). He heightens the personally shattering effect of the war by describing its outbreak at a moment ‘just when I was getting near some idea of what I might do with my life’ (somewhat contradicting the personal crisis announced in his first ever journal entry). After elaborating further on the hopelessness of war, he delves into his memories of June/July 1939, dramatizing the moment of reminiscence itself by rhapsodizing, ‘I like to think now of the days last summer when I wandered naked with H [Harold] over the hot shingle at Pagham’ (p.70). The beaches at Pagham in West Sussex were venerated by Vaughan as ‘an unsullied paradise against which all other places failed to measure up’.<sup>33</sup> His dramatization of reminiscence is a consciously literary effect that exaggerates the distance between the ruined present and the perfect memory of Pagham. For Vaughan the idea of

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<sup>33</sup> Yorke, p.48

paradise proves to be inseparable from an ethos of bodily liberation; he recalls 'the purely sexual excitement of hot sun' before a passage that has since been heavily self-edited with deletions and corrections and some lines scrubbed out entirely in thick marker pen (pp.70-1). This passage describes his states of sexual arousal, and what we can assume to be masturbation, beneath a summer sun which – in this idyll where there is no hierarchy – 'became as tangible and solid as another body', all things embodied being equal. By recalling these times as 'pagan ~~utterly~~ sensual days', Vaughan further reinforces the distance between the revels at Pagham and the authority of the religious and moral structures underpinning the warmongering modern world (p.72). He enthuses over his friend Len who was 'dripping ripe' at the height of his bodily beauty, suggesting a perfect state before the inevitable spoilage not only of Len's body but of every young male body. Having eulogized this pinnacle of physical freedom and well-being, Vaughan expresses his regret that these bodies will fade from memory with a few photographs serving as a distant reminder (p.79). Vaughan's retrospective desire to protect the bodies on the beach (if only through writing) is pressured with extra urgency by the returning consideration of contemporary events. Whether by accident or design, this journal entry ends in dramatic fashion on an incomplete sentence as if curtailed by the loss of radio signal:

That was all in June and July thereabouts. 1939. Before the Soviet had signed the pact with Germany and signed our death warrant. While Mr Neville C was deploring and lamenting the methods used and panicking around to make a pact with Poland and [ends abruptly] (pp.79-80).

Bookended by apocalyptic warnings, this journal entry is structured to emphasize what Vaughan fears will be lost or made irretrievable through war: the ideals of equality and beauty symbolized by the young male body.

Vaughan's defence of the body was connected to his attempts to identify with, and import ideas from, another culture. Vaughan specifically looked to the classical culture of the distant past and in doing so objected not only to war but to the era in which he was living. Weeks writes that, 'The creation of an identity involves finding a delicate balance between the hazards and opportunities of contemporary life and an identification with some sort of history.'<sup>34</sup> Richter Norton goes further by downplaying the importance of contemporary conditions to the formation of homosexual identity and by doing so repudiates theories of social

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<sup>34</sup> Jeffrey Weeks, *Invented Moralities: Sexual Values in an Age of Uncertainty* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995), p.97

constructionism: 'The placing of oneself within the historical queer cultural tradition is an imaginative act that requires only books rather than cruising grounds.'<sup>35</sup> While it is beyond the remit of this study to debate divergent approaches in queer scholarship, we can use the above statements from both critics to illuminate how Vaughan came to identify with a selective interpretation of a 'pagan sensual' culture. Living in a culture (interwar Britain) in which homosexuality was illegal, the opportunity to associate oneself and one's tastes with the homosocial heyday of ancient Greece and its rich intellectual and aesthetic legacy must have had great appeal. Behind the protective veneer of academic respectability the revisiting of classical modes and subjects turned one's gaze to idealized, predominantly male, bodies. If we agree with Norton's statement quoted above, such an identification with classicism must necessarily have been made from the reading of books and the study of art alone; for Vaughan, this identification confirmed his status as an outsider who objects to his own era by seeking the myths and wisdom of another.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, any suggestion of 'neo-Greekness' had been looked upon disparagingly by proponents of hard, spare sexual aesthetics such as Wyndham Lewis and the Vorticists; 'bare feet' and 'fluttering draperies' were deemed too feminine for their visions of thrusting aggression, and 'Henri Gaudier-Brzeska specifically associated the soft contours of the Hellenic tradition with a debased aesthetic [...] He also made the particular connection between Greek sculpture and "Greek love".'<sup>36</sup> While Ezra Pound's tastes certainly incorporated the neo-Greek, his aspiration as a proponent of Imagism was always the achievement of an uncompromisingly hard aesthetic. But after the horrors of the Great War there came 'a craving for the stability and proven value of tradition following disruption, carnage, and vandalism on a scale unparalleled in living memory'.<sup>37</sup> Memories of soldiers unclothed or bathing had aroused in the poets and diarists in that conflict a contemplation of the body's fragility when faced by the new weapons of war.<sup>38</sup> The classical tradition offered artists 'a haven of relative tranquillity' and promised a Europe littered with millions of broken bodies the

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<sup>35</sup> Richter Norton, *The Myth of the Modern Homosexual: Queer History and the Search for Cultural Unity* (London: Cassell, 1997), p.239

<sup>36</sup> Lisa Tickner, 'The Popular Culture of the *Kermesse*: Lewis, Painting, and Performance 1912-3', in *Modernism/Modernity* 4.2 (Baltimore, MD: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), pp.67-120; pp.90-1

<sup>37</sup> Elizabeth Gowling, 'Introduction', in *On Classic Ground: Picasso, Léger, de Chirico and the New Classicism 1910-1930*, ed. Elizabeth Gowling and Jennifer Mundy (London: Tate Gallery, 1990), pp.11-30; pp.11-2

<sup>38</sup> See illustrations of this in Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p.301

comforting myth of the Mediterranean world as ‘pagan not Christian, innocent not fallen’.<sup>39</sup> Many artists revisited the world of classicism and its celebration of the human form unfettered by modern evils. Despite his disregard for slavish anatomical accuracy and his denunciation of ‘the beauties of the Parthenon’ as ‘so many lies’<sup>40</sup>, Pablo Picasso famously refined a neo-classical aesthetic that brought his subjects back from fractured abstraction to a state of serene, wholesome beauty. His *Bathers* (1918), a circular composition in which nude female bodies are arranged in every imaginable pose, is cited by Kenneth Clark and Georg Eisler as bearing the harmonious influence of ancient Greek modes.<sup>41</sup>

Picasso would not have been a specifically homosexual role model, yet Vaughan was undeniably influenced by the Spanish painter and the new legitimization of classical forms and beautiful bodies. Vaughan’s early nude, *Seated Boy* (1937-8), owes much to *Pan’s Flute* (1923) by Picasso with its sense of sculptural solidity and vibrant skin tones. Despite its ostensibly Biblical pretences, Vaughan’s *The Temptation of St Anthony* (c.1936), in which the tempter is hardly convincing as a demonic presence with his comically tiny horns, is simply a picture of two beautiful boys posed carefully and rendered in a neo-classical fashion in which their forms have a fullness granted by soft, glowing colouration and deep shading. A portrait by Vaughan of his brother Dick (1935) aims for the statuesque, the sitter swathed in what appears to be a toga across one half of his torso. Neo-classicism in this period represented a restoration and celebration of the body, predominantly male, and a link to the high ideals and achievements of antique civilization. It must be clarified that Vaughan’s appropriation of a classical aesthetic in his early visual work did not yet correspond to a coherent personal identification, rather a preference with an undeniably flattering, and possibly liberating, homoerotic subtext. It is clear why the young Vaughan responded so enthusiastically to the images and ideas of neo-classicism as opposed to modernist influences when we consider Tim Armstrong’s definition of modernity in relation to the body: ‘it offers the body as lack, at the same time as it offers a technological compensation.’<sup>42</sup> Armstrong describes that compensation as increasingly ‘offered as a part of capitalism’s fantasy of the complete body: in the mechanisms of advertising,

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<sup>39</sup> Gowling, p.12

<sup>40</sup> Michael Squire, *The Art of the Body: Antiquity and Its Legacy* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co., 2011), p.24

<sup>41</sup> Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: a Study of Ideal Art* (London: John Murray, 1957), pp.2-3; Eisler, p.44

<sup>42</sup> Tim Armstrong, *Modernism, Technology, and the Body: a Cultural Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.3

cosmetics, cosmetic surgery, and cinema'.<sup>43</sup> Given Vaughan's insistence on his unhappiness when he was producing advertising copy at Lintas, and therefore complicit in such capitalist mechanisms, it is no wonder that he refused modernity's mandate to augment the human body. In his wartime journal he reveals his likely long-standing distrust of those who would dehumanize the body by reducing it to a statistic: he figures those calculating the war's finances and projected death tolls as 'technicians' who coldly assess 'the cost and time' required (08.03.40; J2, p.113); he imagines men killing and being killed 'as devastatingly and as horribly as all the macabre skill and cunning and power of modern science and military strategy can make possible' (21.05.40; J3, p.113). The momentum of such sentences and the escalation in their provocative terms effectively conveys the excess bred by modern ideas run amok. When he attributes the mechanical killing of men to a 'lack of imagination', a favourite phrase judging from his using it twice in four lines of text, he consolidates through journal-writing his objection not only to war but to a mechanized approach by which the body becomes subservient to misconceptions about progress or advancement.

By believing in the beauty of the body Vaughan offered an alternative vision of a new world. In this respect, his identification with classical ideals is informed not only by interwar neo-classicism but by the earlier attempts at revivalism in the late nineteenth century. William Ewart Gladstone had celebrated Greek philosophy's assertion of 'the place of the Body in human education' and 'the right of the body to be cared for' on the basis of being 'like the soul, an integral part of man himself'<sup>44</sup>; Vaughan's wartime journal-writing on the sanctity of the complete body echoes such sentiments. Vaughan evokes that quintessentially nineteenth-century iteration of classical ideas whereby bodily or facial beauty is equated with virtue, claiming in one journal entry, 'I cannot love a mind if the body that bears it is ugly' (11.08.40; J4, p.1). Also implicit in Vaughan's worship of the moral power of the male body is a valediction of homoeroticism, drawing on another late nineteenth-century neo-classical precedent attributed partly to Walter Pater and J. A. Symonds:

The language of male love could be triumphantly proclaimed the very fountain of civic health in an English polity imperatively in need, precisely as liberal theorists such as Mill and university reformers

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> William Ewart Gladstone, *Address on the Place of Ancient Greece in the Providential Order of the World: Delivered Before the University of Edinburgh* (London: John Murray, 1865), pp.50-1

such as Jowett had all along been insisting, of some authentic new source of ideas and intellectual power.<sup>45</sup>

Pater had made an impassioned case for the value of Hellenic ideals in his chapter on Winckelmann in *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873)<sup>46</sup>; Oscar Wilde later argued for the relevance of Hellenism by making the call for its revival his conclusion to the essay *The Soul of Man under Socialism* (1891).<sup>47</sup> As both writers' promotion of a liberation of the senses carried a sexual subtext, we understand their respective calls for a classical revival as attempts to place the appreciation of beauty at the heart of morality; as Margaret Walters asserts, 'For the aesthete, the Greek nude is a symbol of a high civilization in which the beautiful is also good [...] and it hints, to the homosexual, of a golden age when his desires were freely admitted and even celebrated.'<sup>48</sup> In Vaughan's journal he legitimizes homosexual relations as the employment of a classically sanctioned educative model and therefore something of moral and social value. 'Homosexual love is often idealized in fifth-century [Greek] literature into a teaching relationship between an older man and a boy'<sup>49</sup>, and accordingly Vaughan describes his affection for one of his lovers, despite the lack of any notable age gap, in such terms: 'There was a very real bond between us. He acknowledged it in his eyes. Not on equal ground, but more of master and pupil, ~~Socrates and Plato~~ a la Grèque.' (11.03.40; J2, p.129) In a later entry he expresses his desire for a sexual relationship with a 'Spartan Teacher pupil aspect' (18.08.42; J13, p.2). Recalling the influence of his first sexual relationship, he emphasizes the importance of communion not only between bodies but between minds: 'I have set out always with this preconceived ideal of physical and psychic harmony effortlessly coming together. The friend and lover.' (04.04.40; J3, p.14) Such an ideal is reminiscent of Plato's homosocial vision of spiritual 'progeny', as opposed to 'recourse to women', in *The Symposium*.<sup>50</sup>

Vaughan's interest in the young male body as a subject for visual art had been established long before the outbreak of war and the commencement of his journal-writing. As he had not attended art school or been formally trained, 'the

<sup>45</sup> Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), p.xv

<sup>46</sup> Walter Pater, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, ed. Matthew Beaumont (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 'Oxford World's Classics', 2010), pp.86-117. The chapter on Winckelmann was first published six years prior in 1867.

<sup>47</sup> Oscar Wilde, 'The Soul of Man under Socialism', in *De Profundis and Other Writings* (London: Penguin, 'Penguin Classics', 1986), pp.17-53; p.53

<sup>48</sup> Margaret Walters, *The Nude Male: a New Perspective* (London: Paddington Press, 1978), p.34

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p.47

<sup>50</sup> Plato, *The Symposium*, trans. Walter Hamilton (London: Penguin, 1951), p.90



beach and ballet were, in effect, his very own life class'<sup>51</sup>. Without such readily available sources of inspiration, the wartime period nevertheless saw Vaughan pursue the subject of the nude male in his sketches and drawings. Assailed by the thought and reality of bodies altered through injury, and convinced in his journal-writing of what is being violated for political gain, he redoubled his efforts to preserve the beauty of the body. He writes of looking to Michelangelo in order to learn the techniques for capturing 'the details of a nude satisfactorily' (09.10.41; J7, p.36), while images of heavy-set neo-classical male nudes (in the style that we find in his sketchbook dated 1940<sup>52</sup>) feature frequently in his visual work. In the early war years we also find Vaughan producing images of male beauty as symbols of hope. A pen and ink sketch entitled *Idol* (1940) depicts a crowd raising a huge idol of a male body, its head thrown back in an ecstatic pose, in what appears to be an act of pagan worship. In 1941 Vaughan draws an illustration on the title page of his copy of *Remember Man: a Poem* by Christopher Lee, complementing the grand humanitarian message of this title with a lovingly rendered image of a young man's head and shoulders in profile, his beautiful face turned upwards to the sky in hope.<sup>53</sup>

Vaughan confirms the tireless attention that the young male body received in his visual work when he begins a journal entry in 1943 by relaying the difficulty of organizing his pictures: 'All day I have been sorting out my drawings and trying to classify them. Hundreds and hundreds of boys.' (15.06.43; J16, p.3) He remarks that whenever he drew in a 'spontaneous outburst' then 'the subject was always a nude boy'. He also notes how 'weary' he is of 'all these boys', how – probably given the social and romantic insecurities that are articulated in his journal and examined in the second chapter of this study – 'they are so alive with a strange tormenting quality'. Nevertheless they were clearly of great importance to Vaughan, as evidenced by his inability to throw them away and his working on their organization 'like a madman' for 12 hours without a break (p.4). Most significantly, he remarks on how '[t]hey were all beginnings', studies for later works, and how '[t]he drawings still have the feeling of the beginning' (p.3). It is interesting that Vaughan uses the definite article here and in doing so suggests the restorative promise symbolized by the male nude, its preservation of an idyll believed lost having implications not merely personally but socially. Informed by Freudian theory, Adrian Stokes argues for the status of the nude as a precious whole-object: 'The human body thus

<sup>51</sup> Vann with Hastings, p.42

<sup>52</sup> Copy of a Keith Vaughan sketchbook titled 'Shere 1940: Pubs, Interiors, Houses, Trees', held at Tate Archive, London, catalogue ref: TGA20111/29, 1 folder.

<sup>53</sup> Exhibited at *Visions and Recollections: Prunella Clough and Keith Vaughan*, Menier Gallery, London, 15<sup>th</sup> April to 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2014.

conceived is a promise of sanity.’<sup>54</sup> With Kenneth Clark having announced the nude to be ‘the most serious of all subjects in art’<sup>55</sup>, Stokes asserts that ‘the future will need societies devoted to the contemplation of whole-objects’<sup>56</sup>, arguing precisely for the social role of the nude in art. It is hardly surprising that during a period of war Vaughan pursued the subject of the young male body and its promise in his journal-writing and sketches.

Looking to the body enabled Vaughan to write against war with a power and persuasiveness that he often feared he lacked. Scarry declares that:

The beautiful, almost without any effort of our own, acquaints us with the mental state of conviction, and so pleasurable a mental state is this that ever afterwards one is willing to labor, struggle, wrestle with the world to locate enduring sources of conviction – to locate what is true.’<sup>57</sup>

Vaughan undoubtedly found the male form beautiful and by writing of his concerns for its sanctity – and, by extension, the values and promise it embodied – he strengthened his anti-war stance. Beauty itself became a shorthand for high and admirable ideals in Vaughan’s journals and was usually associated with classicism. Appreciating the city of Bath as ‘the perfect preservation of the spirit of the Georgians’, Vaughan resolves to return when ‘in the mood for elegance and classic restraint’ (16.08.41; J6, p.68). ‘Elegance’ in this statement seems fairly straightforward but the connotations of ‘restraint’ are ones of careful deliberation and minimization of force, qualities that would chime with enlightened objectors. It is not surprising, then, that Vaughan writes of imagining a composition in paint during his return from Bath, a picture in which sunlight falls on radiant architecture rising from layers of lush green<sup>58</sup>, an idealized vision of a beautiful and just *polis* (p.69). In contrast, unfavourable qualities are often associated with bodies that lack beauty or animation. Feeling that he has outgrown his admiration for Beethoven, Vaughan decides that, despite the composer’s undeniable craftsmanship, he is no longer moved by ‘his brute unsupple power’ (26.05.42; J11, p.1). In the journal entry written prior (the entry that closes the tenth volume) he praised a male body for its ‘suppleness’ (21.05.42; J10, p.38), the very quality he claims that Beethoven lacks;

<sup>54</sup> Adrian Stokes, *Reflections on the Nude* (London: Tavistock, 1967), p.4

<sup>55</sup> Clark, p.25

<sup>56</sup> Stokes, p.10

<sup>57</sup> Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 2006), p.31

<sup>58</sup> Vaughan often associates the colour green with an unspoiled, irretrievable innocence: ‘We loved with all our hearts and souls with a singleness and innocence and intensity that only green youth knows’ (04.04.40; J3, p.14); ‘youth and greenness [*sic*]’ (‘9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> April’; J3, p.42); ‘a hot and brilliant green’ colours the scene in a recollection of Sundays at school (24.06.40; J3, pp.168-9); nostalgia for ‘[t]he green valley’, ‘green cider’, and ‘emerald pools of chestnuts’ at Codford (21.07.41; J6, p.35).

we appreciate, therefore, that for Vaughan certain favourable physical properties reflected qualities of refinement.

Yet Vaughan was not only drawn to refined forms of beauty but also to images of a physically active and healthy model of masculinity. He was particularly attracted to Spender's elegiac reminiscences of a peaceful time for Germans during which 'they sunbathed, they walked with linked hands under the lime trees, they lay together in the woods, they talked about art'<sup>59</sup>. Germany, like England, had fostered a physically active culture of organized sport as a means by which to judge character, masculinity, and military prowess.<sup>60</sup> Even critical travelogues expressed great admiration for the 'cult of youth and physical fitness' in Germany during the 1930s.<sup>61</sup> Anthony Bertram, the writer and historian who toured Germany and Austria in 1931, observed that '[t]he bodies of young Germany' were fit and 'well cared for', declaring that they represented, in contrast to 'the bodies of old Germany', precisely 'what Germany has won'.<sup>62</sup> To post-war readers Bertram's praise proves awkwardly prescient and even sinister when he declares, 'These beautiful bodies are the soldiers of modernism.'<sup>63</sup> Sure enough, this beautiful image of Germany's physical culture was co-opted and became powerful propaganda: 'The male, rather than the female nude was the major symbol of totalitarian art, particularly in Nazi Germany.'<sup>64</sup> Vaughan demonstrates awareness that Germany's beautiful young bodies have since been turned to a darker purpose: 'I think it is just those singing fair haired bronzed youths who lay out all day in the sun [...] who have now become the regimented morons of destruction' (13.07.40; J3, p.216) We therefore understand his celebration of Germany's beauty as the celebration of a lost beauty. The idea of such a society – and its subsequent ruination – chimed simultaneously with Vaughan's own homoerotic longing to experience something similar and his desire to identify with a distant (and likely irretrievable) ideal: the existence of young bodies in a prelapsarian harmony with nature and each other. This may account for how Vaughan, despite his stance against violence, could justify his veneration of classical civilization despite the fact that in such physical cultures as ancient Greece athleticism was not only developed for sports and games but for

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<sup>59</sup> Stephen Spender, 'September Journal 1939', in *Journals 1939 – 1983*, ed. John Goldsmith (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), pp.23-55; p.25

<sup>60</sup> R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p.195

<sup>61</sup> Rau, p.149

<sup>62</sup> Anthony Bertram, *Pavements and Peaks* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1933), p.70

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Walters, p.258

an aggressively military purpose.<sup>65</sup> So distant was ancient Greece that Vaughan was willing to consider ‘the Greek-Persian wars’ – albeit only under what he admits is the influence of Compton Mackenzie and A. G. MacDonnell<sup>66</sup> – as the only historical case in which war had been justifiable (07.04.40; J3, p.19). Certainly few images of the bodily reality of injury in war persisted from this culture, with the classical nude ‘rarely marked in any way by effort or suffering’; Walters confirms, ‘Even in the thick of battle the tense bodies of the warriors are clear and undistorted, and those rare works which show the death of a hero insist on his untouched beauty.’<sup>67</sup>

When not beholden to the bodily reality of injury, Vaughan was not averse to considering the appeal of war or revealing his fascination with war on an aesthetic, often sexualized level. He concedes that war is ‘damnably glamorous’ with its ‘virile exciting shapes’, asking whether by virtue of its precision warfare could even be considered beautiful (26.01.40; J2, p.45). He cannot help but admire the ‘sleek’ new blue uniforms of men waving from the backs of fire engines (30.08.39; J1, pp.18-9) and enjoys the ‘efficient design’ of camouflaged trucks despite admitting the attendant moral issues surrounding military technology (30.09.39; J1, p.39). Sontag reminds us how Virginia Woolf’s *Three Guineas* (1938) makes the argument ‘that war is a man’s game – that the killing machine has a gender, and it is male’.<sup>68</sup> Vaughan, for all of his longing for a bygone age, was fascinated by machines and the men who operate them. His interest may be attributable to the titillation enjoyed by regarding lower class men at work yet a sketchbook entitled ‘Steel’ focusses predominantly on the machinery itself – the cauldrons, furnaces and vehicles used at a steel mill.<sup>69</sup> Even when condemning the air raids during which death ‘drops daily from the skies’, he sexualizes the machinery involved and its suggestion of dynamic male sexuality: ‘We watch daily, with lustful enjoyment the gladiatorial combats in the skies’ (19.08.40; J4, p.65). Although the image of gladiatorial combat connotes the regression of so-called civilization to little more than barbarism, we cannot overlook the homoerotic evocation of men stripped to the waist engaged in combat. Despite his anti-war stance Vaughan recognized that the war machine was indeed male, possessing the desirable, sexualized attributes of strength and virility.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp.42-3

<sup>66</sup> Mackenzie, who had served with British Intelligence in the Eastern Mediterranean during the First World War, was the author of *Greek Memories* (1932) and a prolific writer and raconteur; MacDonnell, a writer and journalist, was also an enthusiastic military historian.

<sup>67</sup> Walters, p.38

<sup>68</sup> Sontag, p.6

<sup>69</sup> Sketchbook titled ‘Steel’, held at Tate Archive, London, catalogue ref: TGA9013/4, 1 folder.

When Vaughan declares in his journal, 'I cannot justify wilfully inflicted pain on any grounds whatever', he adds the following caveat in parentheses: 'except sexual, and that implies an agreement between both parties' (05.07.40; J3, p.200). Sex, like war, involves the imposition of one's will upon the physical body of another. When war involves those who had the opportunity to conscientiously object and chose not to, the engagement in combat by a soldier can also be considered consensual. It is understandable, therefore, that Vaughan harboured a morbid fascination with the goals of bodily dominance linking sex and violence. Simone Weil asserts that violence, or 'force', objectifies its target/s, reducing 'anybody who is subjected to it into a thing'.<sup>70</sup> The notion of subjugating or even possessing another's body by demonstrating the potency of one's own held a certain appeal for Vaughan. While he cannot condone cruelty through 'hurting' somebody, he confesses that:

lurking deeply at the back of my mind is the desire to destroy something that I cannot have. By killing a body, in a sense you possess it. It responds to your action by ceasing to be. The final and desperate perversion of sex – murder – how near it is. (12.08.40; J4, p.23)

Vaughan certainly considered the soldier to be a potent erotic type; bored during a period of leave at home in 1941, he reflects on his 'pornographic tale of the soldier, on which I was working all last winter year at Guildford' (09.10.41; J7, p.41). He expresses regret that this piece of writing is now 'reduced now only [to] the opening and closing episodes' after he destroyed the rest following an unspecified episode involving the police. Vaughan's disgust at the deaths of young soldiers evidences his disapproval not only of the destruction of innocents but of the paradoxical wasting of their physical potency. A youth, he claims when attempting to empathize with the pilots who machine-gunned a village, 'finds in excitement the proof of his strength and existence [sic]' (01.06.44; J21, p.22). There is abundant evidence that Vaughan wished such 'excitement' could result from sexual liberation rather than warfare. The final page of a major journal entry of anti-war writing finds him referring to an attractive young corporal as an 'Adonis'; bereft of companionship and human connection, Vaughan wishes he could remove the 'straightjacket' in which his 'body ached' (05.07.40; J3, pp.208-9). Faced with this beautiful young male of military rank, a man we can assume to be of notable physical stature and therefore erotic potential, Vaughan is forced to control the instinctive desires aroused by his presence. By ending an entry consisting of anti-war writing (on the evils of inflicting

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<sup>70</sup> Simone Weil, 'The Iliad, or the Poem of Force' (1940), reprinted in *Chicago Review*, 18:2, 1965, pp.5-30; p.6

pain and treating war as a game) with such a vignette, Vaughan objects not only to war but to the denial of a sexual outlet that would purge the male desire to dominate another's body.

Seemingly having drawn his impressions of classical culture more from artistic representations than from history, Vaughan's call for a 'pagan sensual' culture of physical activity and male (homo)sexual liberation was certainly vague and selective. Yet his objection to the political establishment and moral conservatism of Britain and its allies was so strong that this vision persisted. In the wartime volumes of his journal Vaughan gestures towards the necessity of 'revolution'; early on there is optimism that 'this war will change almost imperceptibly into a revolution' that will bring about 'some form of social democratic Europe' (13.08.40; J4, p.37). Years later, this necessity extends beyond Europe and in doing so becomes simultaneously more idealistic and more unwieldy: 'Each side is fighting to prevent a world revolution of ideas, an awakening of the people to the fact that they belong to a brotherhood of man, which would at once threaten their positions as exploiters of man's unawakenedness.' (07.06.44; J21, p.27) In what would prove to be the final months of the war, Vaughan's call for a humanitarian embrace of one's fellow man allowed him to further refine his argument for male (homo)sexual liberation. Following accounts in his journal of liaisons with two different men, he defends casual sex from charges of emotional vacuity:

Unknown and a stranger, ones love is not for him, entirely ~~an~~ ~~individual~~ and alone. He himself is alone & his body is anonymous. His body becomes the symbol of the human race, ageless and historical. One's love for him [is] the love for the youth of ~~the~~ humanity, for the tenderness and hope and springtime of the world. (26.12.44; J24, p.31)

He follows this defence with a consideration, albeit since crossed through, that the female body is too mysterious (perhaps, he figures, too unstable to carry meaning) whereas the male body is more of a symbol and therefore more universally understood and ascribed meaning (pp.32-3). As Walters affirms, 'The male nude is typically public: he strides through city squares, guards public buildings, is worshipped in Church. He personifies communal pride or aspiration.'<sup>71</sup> Vaughan provides a credo for the admiration of (implicitly young) male beauty that cannot help but be, however vaguely, politicized.

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<sup>71</sup> Walters, p.8

With the end of the war came the confirmation in Vaughan's journal that aspirations to a sexually informed revolution may prove futile, thus completing a self-defeating cultural narrative that complemented the self-defeating personal narrative that is analysed in the second chapter of this study. Immediately following a previous entry on the anti-climax of Allied victory, Vaughan describes the 'old lie' of British patriotism emerging as a personified presence at the celebrations: 'The old, old lie has just naturally walked up to the front and seated itself.' (10.05.45; J25, p.21) 'Spreading out its layers of dirty musty petticoats', this mocking figure is identifiably female and seemingly sexually inactive – making it the very antithesis of the vigorous young male symbol of Vaughan's new world. He elaborates the dowdily regressive scene with the reappearance of 'little flags, stored in a dark cupboard since the coronation' and the displaying of photos of the royal family (pp.21-2). Dour domestication, once more, exerts the pressures of heteronormative orthodoxy. All of this, however, is 'not so dangerous as the halftones of Churchill, twinkling, bloated ~~over~~ behind his phallic cigar' (p.22). The wartime leader has become for Vaughan the grotesque embodiment of a conservative and stagnant male sexuality; Churchill may sit pompously behind a thrustingly aggressive cigar yet Vaughan's Freudian interpretation recalls his own argument as to the 'accumulated unacted desires' of the despotic. Thus Churchill embodies the continuation of the political and moral status quo by operating behind a personal symbol that aims to be powerful but reveals weakness. As if to recognize that nothing has changed, just days later Vaughan imagines that a young man he is observing may soon be sent to a new war: 'In due course his thin little body will be torn open by someone else's shell or grenade, his or another's like him.' (22.05.45; J25, p.31) Ultimately it is not the fate of this young man that troubles Vaughan, but the fate once again of the young male body that should be celebrated rather than destroyed. After a line break he begins a new passage by quoting Auden's line "we must love one another or die" and proceeding once more on how the 'Christian ethic' – shorthand for sexual (and therefore) moral conservatism in opposition to sensual paganism – can deceive innocents into participating in wars (p.32).

Throughout the wartime volumes of his journal Vaughan constructed his identity as an objector and in doing so sought to defend not only his anti-war stance but his homosexuality. Having commenced the journal with a declaration that the war and its expectations of masculinity would decisively cast him adrift and leave him perilously alone, Vaughan established an alternative outsider position through a defence of the young male body from injury and destruction that flattered him as being deeply empathetic whilst immune to political influence. Vaughan's defence

involved a repudiation of the political and social consensus that was inherited from Britain's imperial past and reinforced through propaganda and public complicity; in its place he proposed a new consensus founded on the belief that what is beautiful is also just. As nothing was more beautiful to Vaughan than the young male body, he developed his existing interest in classical culture's veneration of the male body to argue for a sexually liberated culture that placed the body at its centre. In the vague and often highly selective arguments that Vaughan makes we recognize that part of the melancholic allure of Vaughan's alternative 'pagan sensual' culture was its impossibility. Nevertheless, Vaughan's anti-war writing constructed his position as an outsider both politically and morally while enshrining what would continue to be his primary subject of artistic enquiry: the young male body.



## 2. Society and the Observer

Having declared his wishes for companionship from the earliest writings in his journal, we might expect that Vaughan welcomed the wartime predominance of enforced male society; his reactions, however, were far more troubled. Shortly after the commencement of his journal, Vaughan found himself in the service of the St John Ambulance. From the first day he was highly irritable, recording his frustrations in his journal. He describes himself sitting and reading through the requisite medical literature whilst his ambulance colleagues play ping-pong and billiards around him, the sound of 'popular vulgar music on the wireless' driving him to distraction (05.09.39; J1, p.31). 'I wish I was properly in with the machine', he complains regretfully, 'This waiting, these silly parlour games all day are tedious and nerve racking'. He holds out hope that 'if any of the war is to be glamorous, surely this should be', yet is preparing himself for disappointment (p.32). Writing later that month he acknowledges the unwelcome associations aroused by the beds and the food in their crowded quarters, claiming that 'it is so like school that I become easily of schoolboy mentality again. That in itself is disconcerting' (30.09.39; J1, p.40). These associations heighten when he writes of letting down his team in a ping-pong tournament with the other volunteers: 'I felt rattled and irritable and self-pitiful. Just like school again, a sense of ostracism and being outcast, silently disapproved of but never openly voiced abuse, which is easier to combat [...] I thought I had done with those days' (14.10.39; J1, p.65). Regenia Gagnier identifies in autobiographies and memoirs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the necessity of game-playing in all aspects of public school life: from the contests on the sports field to the bids for upwards progress through the boys' social hierarchy.<sup>1</sup> For Vaughan, his creative gifts and sensitive disposition had been linked with removal from male society and its game-playing ever since the early days of his schooling when his art master, Mr Rigby, had encouraged his talent and rewarded him with 'access to special school facilities to help develop his artistic abilities'.<sup>2</sup> Despite his art master's best intentions, Vaughan had been singled out; sports and group activities, therefore, reminded him of the distance he had felt from his peer groups ever since his school days.

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<sup>1</sup> Regenia Gagnier, *Subjectivities: a History of Self-Representation in Britain, 1832-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp.178-80

<sup>2</sup> Gerard Hastings, 'Keith Vaughan: Drawings', in *Keith Vaughan: Gouaches, Drawings & Prints* (London: Osborne Samuel, 2011), pp.5-12; p.5

We cannot know the extent to which, if there was no discernible vocal abuse, Vaughan exaggerates the response of his peers in the aforementioned episode, yet by writing of their disapproval in this way he nevertheless crafts a narrative in which he is the outsider. He re-casts his part in this little drama, imagining his old friend Aubrey 'in a like position, winning the day, though losing the game. But no – through over seriousness I create a calamity from what is trivial' (p.66). While there is certainly self-awareness demonstrated here, he has through writing, rather than simply 'over seriousness', created the calamity that he proceeds to critique. The recurring pattern of dramatizing events and chastising himself for his reaction is characteristic of Vaughan's cyclical – or, perhaps more aptly, spiralling – reasoning. He writes of his discomfort in certain situations because he feels different from others, yet by writing of his tendency to self-dramatize (rather than, for instance, act confidently like Aubrey) he once again reinforces his difference from others. This chapter explains how Vaughan dramatized through journal-writing the social differences and exclusions that he perceived between himself and other individuals and groups; these are often figured in terms of distance, real or imagined. He writes that, since his days at Lintas, he 'was always frustrated and dissatisfied' and so he 'turned inwards': 'If I could only break this glass bowl that encloses me and touch life with my naked hands, even the hem of its garments.' (04.11.39; J2, pp.9-10) The first section of this chapter considers how Vaughan uses the early volumes of the journal to record his difficulties in making contact with his fellow man and reinforce them through self-dramatization. The second section explores the strategies employed by Vaughan to emphasize his difference from other individuals and groups and therefore justify and maintain his distance from them. The third section argues that Vaughan constructs a social role that makes use of his remove from male society: that of the observer. From this position he is able to laud his own powers of perception whilst evading the problems of social involvement and possible surveillance.

### **i. Making Contact**

While serving as an ambulance volunteer, Vaughan concedes that, 'There is warmth and ~~friend~~ toleration in my associates – if there is not friendliness it [is] only through my apartness and shyness, and inability to identify my life with theirs' (15.11.39; J2, p.15). He envies the 'ordered simplicity' of those around him, casting

himself as ‘a spectator and never really a player’. Paradoxically, it is enforced proximity to his peers that seems to have emphasized his distance from them: ‘There is nothing wrong with these people – but I resent that I should be forced to this intimacy with them, and my resentment turns me to dislike and avoid them, surlily [*sic*]’ (30.10.39; J2, p.15). Vaughan seems aware in his journal-writing of this self-fulfilling prophecy in which he presumes the worst and consequently experiences it. Vaughan seems to have never given his experience in the ambulance service a fair chance: he initially declares that he misses Lintas (his hated former employer) out of a simple need for security (05.09.39; J1, p.32), and mocks the eagerness with which his colleagues undertake and debate the exercise of bandaging and splinting a compound fracture (04.10.39; J1, pp.51-2). In other moments he is at least able to reflect on how the war has, somewhat surprisingly, afforded him ‘[f]reedom, peace, leisure, companionship. Not quite so vividly perhaps as the noble names imply, but undeniably there’ (21.02.40; J2, p.95). Regardless of those opportunities for companionship, Vaughan would continually express dissatisfaction with the male society into which he had been admitted and to such an extent that on occasion he regretted being a conscientious objector and having passed up the opportunities for ‘companionship’ in the army (31.07.40; J3, p.229).

When combined with a routine of manual labour the enforced male society of wartime continued to elicit a disillusioned response from Vaughan. Having officially registered as a non-combatant he was drafted into the N.C.C. (Non-Combatant Corps) and arrived to endure dreary conditions at Ilfracombe in January 1941. Felicity Goodall quotes from the testimony of Londoner Ken Shaw who as a C.O. joined No.9 NCC at Ilfracombe; Shaw recalls the bitter weather and the discomfort of sleeping on palliasses and corroborates ‘a very monotonous and back-breaking routine of hard work’.<sup>3</sup> Vaughan would also have been overwhelmed by the social pressures of such a situation judging from Shaw’s estimation that ‘2-300 people from all over Britain [were] meeting for the first time’<sup>4</sup>. The routine of physical labour in tough conditions continued as the Corps moved from Ilfracombe to Bulford and later Codford. The strenuous nature of this labour gave Vaughan cause for concern as he hoped that a numbed body would not dim his intellect: ‘I don’t know why physical effort should so fetter the mind – but it does. What I’m afraid of is that one may get, in time, so that one is unfit for anything else but this dull labouring’ (06.02.41; J5, p.11). While Vaughan formed friendships during this period that are addressed later in this chapter, his dissatisfaction with barracks

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<sup>3</sup> Goodall, pp.116-7

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.117

society is evident. An untitled sketch in ink from this period depicts a group of men sat in a cabin, none of whom seem to be interacting with another; one rests his head on his hand, another reads, the rest perhaps are sleeping.<sup>5</sup> Vaughan's sketch offers an insight into the exhaustion experienced by members of the Corps even in what appears to be their relaxation time. Life in the Corps was largely a grind, and Vaughan often considered volunteering for transfer to more glamorous areas of the war effort; throughout journal entries spanning May 1942 he strongly considered switching to bomb disposal, work that, according to Barker, 'demanded a certain courage' and that 'excited admiration from everyone'<sup>6</sup>. Sure enough, when drawing up in his journal a for-and-against list with three points in either column, Vaughan lists, '3. gain in social status (war society)' (28.05.42; J11, p.2).

Insecure of his place in male society during wartime, Vaughan was forthright on the unfortunate necessity of playing roles. When writing of his wildly contrasting moods over a twenty-four-hour period, he asks, 'I would like to know what I really am. I suppose one can choose what aspect of oneself shall represent one at life's banquet. Cultivating that until to the outside world it becomes indistinguishable from the real person.' (02.10.39; J1, pp.49-50) Sometimes these performances were undertaken out of professional necessity – albeit a necessity that was still frustrating for him. Having taken home a twenty-one-year-old youth who had come off his motorcycle and who Vaughan had attended with the ambulance crew, he writes of meeting the youth's mother and trying 'to reassure her' whilst knowing he was 'playing a stupid role' (30.09.39; J1, p.37). While his professional capacity in this instance made his temporary submission to expected behaviour a justifiable compromise, Vaughan was clearly more perturbed by the role-playing required in order to ingratiate himself into the male society around him:

As usual the main problem was to establish myself as a person. As usual I failed to do it. Succeeding only in being the fag and of a lot of different people [...] I'm so tired of this performance [...] I simply cease to exist among men in whose company I am received. (14.12.40; J4, pp.106-7)

Vaughan was concerned by the prospect of only ever appearing but never actually *being*, a problem made all the worse because he generally seemed to project a fairly safe, innocuous persona around others that betrayed his irascible, opinionated character. In a gruelling entry of self-analysis written on his twenty-eighth birthday, in which he states his inability to perceive within himself 'a fixed and determined

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<sup>5</sup> Untitled sketch held at Tate Archive, London, catalogue ref: TGA9013/1/33

<sup>6</sup> Barker, p.81

identity' (23.08.40; J4, p.71), Vaughan 'condemns himself as self-dramatizing, changeable, full of self-doubts and self-deception, but probably presenting quite a stable exterior to the world.'<sup>7</sup> Norton argues that '[m]any public identities are really masks, which can be changed to suit the occasion', and claims that such change happens 'while the inner identity remains stable', continuing, 'A look at diaries written by queer men (for example, Parker Tyler, and Carl Van Vechten) rarely reveals their work identity, but demonstrates instead that the subject upon which they reflect is a single, coherent queer identity.'<sup>8</sup> Although Vaughan was right to acknowledge the interchangeability of roles and masks, he generally did not present or reflect upon the kind of coherent queer identity to which Norton refers due to his frequent claims that his need to (and his ability to) play roles resulted from an inner lack of substance.

When not performing roles publically, Vaughan often performed in his journal the masochistically recurrent and romantically-informed role of the sensitive outcast. In an account of a brooding nocturnal walk he dramatizes removing himself from the din of society: 'I walked by the river – the shadows were full of soldiers and girls [...] I left behind the throbbing sounds and only the moon and the water and the chill damp night was left.' (30.09.39; J1, pp.37-8) In this entry he leaves heteronormative society behind by his own volition but struggles with the isolating reality of what was expected to be an idyllic retreat: 'the path wound on and became strange and lonely so I turned back with an empty longing... for what, for whom, the same old story.' The pastoral imagery and the evocation of longing through floundering repetition confirm that through journal-writing this role was informed by literary, and specifically romantic, conventions. Elsewhere an instance of pathetic fallacy opens the second volume of the journal. Vaughan begins by announcing that '[t]hese are days of ~~deliberately~~ a deliberately heightened emotionalism', before describing the abundant gifts of nature and 'the richest and ripest' autumn in memory (26.10.39; J2, p.1). He describes this bountiful and healthy state as being '[a]s though the earth had disinterest herself finally in man's madness and had turned inward to work out her own destiny, regardless of his participation'; this flourishing as a result of turning inwards suggests that Vaughan himself has made such a resolution regarding his own relationship with society and his fellow man. Given the richness of his descriptive language in such entries he seems to wallow in his distance from society and his resulting loneliness despite these sincere protestations in his first ever journal entry:

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<sup>7</sup> Yorke, p.59

<sup>8</sup> Norton, pp.34-5

I imagined that complete loneliness could only afflict a person who deliberately desired and sought it. But I find this is not so. I find myself alone in spite of the fact that my dearest wish is to be on intimate terms with my fellow men. (25.08.39; J1, pp.12-3)

He certainly wallows in episodes of romantic disappointment as evidenced by the florid, often extravagant language of an early journal entry. This entry adopts the romantic register of a desperate lovesick appeal that addresses its object of affection (in this case 'Stephen') as 'you'. Vaughan claims, 'your cold knife cut the heart out of my tender happiness and re-established the knowledge of my incompetence [...] Why must I always be so hurt by your indifference [...] I wanted so desperately to love you tonight.' (30.12.39; J2, pp.37-8) Eschewing any influence of literature's more subtle representations of heartache he instead launches a salvo of increasingly overwrought language:

Must I always love and turn back and eat the soured vomit of my heart in silent helplessness. There is such a weight of bitterness that closes this year tonight and you Stephen join the long column of those who have choked me with my tears [...] (p.38)

Once again Vaughan takes the opportunity to highlight the self-professed inevitability of him being rejected by society: 'somehow you are part of that rythm [*sic*], the rythm of normality of ordinariness, which I ache for and which I know is never for me.' (p.41) By dramatizing his exclusion in such grandiose terms Vaughan prepares himself for future rejections by situating his experience in a larger narrative of disappointment – informed by the romantic type of the suffering, overreaching lover – that promises to be self-perpetuating.

Vaughan's wartime experience, and his record of this period in his journal, was dominated by his infatuations with colleagues and comrades. Philip Vann comments that, 'To write such things then was a daring, perhaps foolhardy thing to do; the consequences for him, if his diaries had been found, could have been drastic'.<sup>9</sup> The earliest prolonged infatuation recorded by Vaughan in his journal is that with Ted Stephenson, whose name in some of Vaughan's more rhapsodic journal entries is codified as 'Stephen'.<sup>10</sup> Vaughan writes of awaking to find him at his bedside 'bending over me, quiet and gentle and enquiring [...] I felt the quality of

<sup>9</sup> Vann with Hastings, p.41

<sup>10</sup> This conclusion is based predominantly on an asterisked note (made by Vaughan some decades later, likely in the 1970s, judging from the ink and handwriting) corresponding to the journal entry dated 20<sup>th</sup> Feb 1940 (J2, p.84). The asterisk marks the word 'Steven' on the first line of the entry, with the corresponding note reading 'Ted Stephenson (Steve/Steven)'. Despite the difference in spelling between the 'Stephen' referred to in the original journal and the 'Steve/Steven' of the later note, we can appreciate this slight variant to represent one last subtle layer of codification on Vaughan's part.

a vision and I reached up my arms to him like a dream' (21.02.40; J2, p.90). The somewhat hackneyed romantic trope of reaching out in vain emphasizes the distance Vaughan felt between himself and Ted despite their ostensible proximity in an intimate environment. Vaughan manages to chastely hold 'his hand in mine' while they talk but the presence of a fellow comrade in the same quarters frustrates Vaughan and prevents the moment from being all he imagines it could be. 'I tried to pull him down by the shoulders but it was impossible physically', Vaughan continues, 'I felt silly at making so little impression' (p.91). Recounting the scene in terms of trying – and failing – to grapple with Ted, to bring him physically closer, dramatizes and reinforces what he perceives as their emotional distance from one another. The front cover of Vaughan's second journal volume bears the dedication 'TED – Cris de Coeur'<sup>11</sup>; Vaughan's use of French here not only corresponds to another tried-and-tested convention of romantic writing, but also acts as another level of codification. As Vaughan did not always employ such measures to codify the names of his infatuations, his desire to mediate his experiences of Ted through a pseudonym and a dedication in French reveals itself as a wilful imposition of distance through literary artifice – a strategy that revels in the actual emotional distance between them and the likelihood of Vaughan being left hurt and disappointed. Vaughan acknowledges his excessively romanticized treatment of Ted in his journal yet continues, masochistically, to stress the importance of his pursuit: 'I realise that to an extent I am still projecting on to him my old idealism [...] He is important because he is an opportunity to love genuinely and reasonably and unselfishly. The very process of doing so is spiritually beneficial' (19.03.40; J2, p.176).

Vaughan wrote frequently and emphatically of his frustrated romantic longings yet acknowledged that this was a repetitive pattern of behaviour. His awkward pursuits of men who were either married or largely unaware of his romantic/sexual intentions allude once again to a predilection for emotional masochism. He devotes many wartime pages to recounting conversations and interactions with a later romantic interest, Bill Geest. One entry recalls the following discourse: 'We talked about all the usual things – school days, early life, marriage, hopes [for the] future [...] I do not want to go through the old curriculum all over again' (03.09.41; J7, pp.5-6). Vaughan's reference to 'the old curriculum' suggests that this conversation is sadly one that has been had with many men before Bill; his choice of 'curriculum' here, and its allusion to the programmes adhered to in school

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<sup>11</sup> Translates from French as 'a cry from the heart', an impassioned appeal.

days, also suggests that he had been forming inappropriate attachments with unavailable men since the earliest days of his youth. In August 1941 he seemed to grow weary of these repetitions even as his feelings for Bill grew. ‘Last summer it was Ted, this summer Bill’, Vaughan writes, stressing the interchangeability of his romantic attachments or perhaps more specifically, in his reference to the ‘tedium and hopelessness’ of his situation, the repetitive nature of his own feelings towards whosoever the desired person may be (27.08.41; J6, p.97). In the next day’s journal entry he describes at length an idyllic walk with Bill but is quick to dash any suggestion of romantic expectation or progress with Bill in this written account and once again asserts that ‘to write about Bill is only to repeat all that I wrote last summer about Ted’ (28.08.41; J6, p.111). Vaughan was so exhausted by his compulsion to fixate on certain men with whom he shared company that he remarked with relief on the last day of that year: ‘It is probably a long time since I have thought with pleasure about people without having been, being, or hoping to be, in love with them’ (31.12.41; J8, p.9).

While writing of his infatuations in his journal had undoubtedly dramatized and reinforced the distance Vaughan perceived between himself and others, it nevertheless had served some cathartic purpose. One entry in which this is evident has the heading ‘Conversation’ somewhat elaborately (and uncharacteristically) flanked by the name ‘Freddie’ on the left of the page (the name of Vaughan’s current infatuation) and a date and time on the right. The date is of interest because it reads ‘July 15<sup>th</sup> 6.30’ despite the fact that the following journal entry is dated 14<sup>th</sup> July, suggesting that this ‘conversation’ recorded by Vaughan is actually part of an entry dated 11<sup>th</sup> July 1942 (an entry which only occupies the upper half of the page above the aforementioned title) but has been given a date in the future for reasons that will become apparent. Beneath the title Vaughan has written a two-line epigraph: ‘I don’t want to take up anything - | I don’t like the word useful’ (11.07.42; J12, p.6)<sup>12</sup>. The remainder of this journal entry proceeds as a dialogue between who we can assume is Vaughan and young Freddie, whom the former urges to do something with his life beyond the bland, accepted rites of passage. Despite Freddie’s protestations that he’s marrying so as to be happy, fulfilled, and never alone, Vaughan retorts, “There’s part of you that’s always alone deep down [...] A deep secret loneliness that makes you yourself and not anyone quite else” (p.9). Approaching the closing passage of this entry we find the following statement: ‘Midnight – All this was dream Freddie.’ (p.12) With this evidence and the

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<sup>12</sup> For reasons provided above this journal entry is cited in this study as ‘11<sup>th</sup> July 1942’.



speculative future date it is very likely that this journal entry was either partly or entirely a fantasized fictionalization – perhaps an imagined continuation of a conversation from which the epigraph quotes. The frank and unsparing tone of the inquisitor (who we assume is Vaughan) certainly suggests a degree of confidence that Vaughan predominantly claims to be incapable of in social interactions. This entry demonstrates the usefulness of journal-writing in developing or rehearsing situations in a safe space. His journal-writing allowed Vaughan to play with the distance between himself and his subject; on the one hand, he cathartically brings a young man to whom he feels emotionally drawn within reach by asking him questions and imaginatively constructing his answers, yet on the other hand he re-emphasizes the gulf between them by acknowledging the fictionality – and by implication, the need for fictionality – in the interaction that he is presenting.

## **ii. Maintaining Distance**

From the very beginning of his journal Vaughan most commonly distinguishes himself from others by making a case for his own superiority. In his first ever journal entry, he does this in the context of positing a different kind of courage to that which is only measured and proven physically: ‘I think I can claim to possess a degree of moral courage superiour [*sic*] to the average man.’ (25.08.39; J1, p.8) Yet by making the comparison between himself and the vaguely defined ‘average man’, Vaughan conveys a somewhat blanket belief in his own exceptionality that relies on assumptions about ‘the average man’ to create an *other*. He is similarly vague in an entry dated just weeks later in which he criticizes his own complacency when given access to homely comforts; he writes of his ‘self contempt’ and being driven ‘in some way to prove my superiority over people to whom I know I am superior’ whilst being ‘forced to operate in a medium unadapted to proving it’ (11.10.39; J1, p.58). Vaughan may be writing of how such desires manifest ‘rashly and irresponsibly’, but his concerns regarding ‘[l]iving under conditions which make no demands on the qualities I think I have’ evidence his belief in a superiority that would become apparent if presented with the required challenge (p.59). The ‘people’ to whom he refers are not identified or elaborated upon and the nature of Vaughan’s superiority is not clarified; even when expressing frustration at his own responses and reactions, he constructs a relationship between himself and anyone who he can group together – be they ‘average’ men or simply ‘people’ – in which he is distanced

and favourably distinguished by difference (however unspecified). In Edward Said's phrasing, employed in his seminal study of identity formation and stereotyping, *Orientalism* (1978), Vaughan consistently adopts a 'flexible *positional* superiority'<sup>13</sup> that allows him to posit the inferiority of other individuals and groups primarily based on assumptions and with little or no supporting evidence.

Vaughan begins to construct in the early volumes of his journal a type of 'the average man' by condescendingly regarding individuals in his company as beautifully simple and blissfully ignorant. 'Johnie is the simplest, gentlest creature I know', he enthuses. 'I asked him if he was a boy scout. He said he had been and still is. I never suspected him of being quite so simple' (14.10.39; J1, pp.66-7). Vaughan continues his observations of 'Johnie' in this manner, remarking of the young man's proudly professed ability to light a fire, 'I think there can be nothing in his life of greater import'. By denigrating Johnie's deference for the Scouts and their training Vaughan manages to cast aspersions on the organization's general education in obedience and duty, resembling in many ways a public school education<sup>14</sup>, and its production of dedicated, credulous young men. Elsewhere he regards the 'sadly incongruous' sight of Johnie praying to be endearingly twee, asking from his assumed position as an enlightened atheist, 'how does he fit in his god with this world' (30.10.39; J2, p.4). Writing during the period of his infatuation with Ted, Vaughan admits that he is '[s]triving to drain from each moment with him a significance and depth that it never held [...] He talked much of the time, and I listened to his voice more than his words' (21.11.39; J2, pp.16-7). This suggestion that Ted has little of value to say is supported when Vaughan writes on the subject of the 'channels of living' available to Ted as if addressing him directly: 'You don't question too much, you don't know what's beyond, you don't need to because what you have is what you want [...] Picasso, Stravinsky [...] Freud, Joyce are unknown and unsought' (20.02.40; J2, pp.85-6). Given his infatuation with Ted, we can consider the tone of Vaughan's writing – with its dramatization of his wonderment at such specimens of humanity – as a means by which he protects himself from disappointment by representing his interest as a somewhat detached fascination as opposed to an emotional or intellectual connection. In much the same way as the Orientalist, who is 'a watcher, never involved, always detached'<sup>15</sup>, Vaughan constructs what he is by emphasizing what those around him are not; he is educated, questioning, and troubled, because he is fascinated by the impression that

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<sup>13</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p.7

<sup>14</sup> Mosse, p.135

<sup>15</sup> Said, p.103

they are not. When Vaughan seems to laud or denounce others for their simplicity, he attempts to justify any present or future difficulties in interacting socially by emphasizing his difference from others whilst putting forward the claim of his own superiority.

Vaughan's strategy of belittling others and elevating himself also involved refiguring, sometimes quite subtly, those around him as animalistic in their desires and behaviour. When faced with the prospect of his loves being conclusively unrequited, he was often motivated to undermine the institutions and norms of heterosexuality as being the residue of an undeveloped animal nature. Recalling a conversation with Ted, who had just revealed his dashed hopes of entering the air force as a draughtsman artificer, Vaughan writes the following:

Then he told me about his cubs [his children] speaking with the warm surety and happiness [of] when a man recounts his treasures. And I was introduced to a new world of primitive make believe and fairyland [...] And I knew the closed finality and completeness of his life and felt sad at my exclusion. (27.11.39; J2, p.27)

While he emphasizes Ted's happiness in this entry he nevertheless disparages the heteronormative life as simplistic and 'primitive'. In this context, his professed sadness at being excluded carries with it the prestige of *not* being what Ted is and *not* believing what Ted believes in, a prestige that elevates Vaughan and thus justifies his distance. His impressions of animalistic simplicity also implicated women, who he often figured in his early journal-writing as little more than the enforcers of dour, restrictive heteronormativity. When, in the same volume, he describes dancing with a certain woman at a social, a 'her' who has intimate knowledge of his love (at this time likely to have been Ted), Vaughan recalls:

I looked on the lips he kissed [...] I held the body that knew his [...] I watched the feet, cracked leather, split with bunions, trodden heels, cheap tinselly silver gold, darned stocking, in groups of four, two male, two female, and endless processions, shuffled on like animals into the ark. ('Saturday'; J2, p.81)

The syntactical momentum and the accumulation of imagery convey the overwhelming nature of this spectacle, and of Vaughan's disbelief, and position him against an overwhelming majority. Here he rejects any romantic notions of couples dancing in favour of exposing what he believes to be the banal reality of obligatory pairing for eventual procreation. In such instances where he focusses on their drab clothes and signs of physical wear he also conflates women with all of the assumed domestic drudgery and constraints of heteronormativity. This conflation may have origins in his days at Lintas judging from the advertising copy he produced for

products such as Spry cooking fat; there he worked on newspaper spreads featuring stocky housewives proudly holding aloft pies and puddings or banal exchanges between women poking their heads through the windows of adjoining suburban homes.<sup>16</sup>

By examining the structure of one particular journal entry we understand how sophisticated Vaughan's strategies of condescension became and how they were often employed as a defence mechanism when he envied the social successes of others. He begins an entry by deriding the 'irresponsibility and lack of any political sense' of many around him, criticizing '[t]he hard gloss that covers them, usually a readymade religious sect, preventing any rub or friction from the problems of living' (18.08.41; J6, p.71). He briefly digresses to chastise a comrade in the Corps who has brought with him a set of jazz instruments before returning to complain that '[i]n many cases the position of C.O. seems to have been taken up simply at the dictate of a political or religious body' and with 'no personal agonizing struggle or problem'. Vaughan was clearly frustrated by the perceived lack of pacifist anguish amongst his peers and was therefore calling into question the legitimacy of their stances and implicitly elevating his own. He continues by asserting that he cannot oppose even Hitlerism if it means employing the terrible methods of modern warfare, a re-statement of his own convictions that is intended to contrast with the aforementioned easy answers accepted by his peers (pp.72-3). The subject then turns to more immediate events as he writes of his acquaintance Raymond Bott who has come to visit the Corps after having transferred out. Vaughan reminisces about the last few weeks at Codford when Ray was still around and writes of '[h]is open honest eyes' which 'had the frank innocence of a child' (p.74). Once again Vaughan casts a comrade as a naïve innocent as opposed to an independently-minded individual. In a catalogue of put-downs he casts aspersions on Raymond's achievements by struggling to reconcile Ray's athletic achievements with him being a chess champion (for 'he was no intellectual'), mocks Ray's liking for watercolours and '[s]entimental Chopin and Victorian opera transcriptions', and suspects his job title – that of 'research scientist' – of 'suggesting rather more than it actually contained' (pp.74-6). Vaughan's reasons for dismissing these attributes and achievements becomes clear when he writes of Ray's friendship with Bill, the man with whom he is infatuated at the time of writing: 'It made me sad and envying and happy to watch the light in their eyes as they romped together like cubs'. (p.76) Figuring them as happy oblivious animals, Vaughan casts himself as the outsider

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<sup>16</sup> Items catalogued ref: TGA9013/2/11-17 in 'Advertising Work' held at Tate Archive, London.

looking in, tormented by wrestling with his own convictions while they enjoy an attachment that is ‘natural, unforced, straightforward’ (p.77). Although he plays his role magnanimously, it is clear that Vaughan’s self-dramatized distance from the wholesome innocence of normative male relationships – in which laymen are unburdened by burning moral questions, self-doubt and unrequited homosexual longing – has informed the whole architecture of this journal entry.

In later journal entries there appears to have been a softening of Vaughan’s attacks on heteronormativity in favour of increasing once again his self-dramatized distance from a world of which he can never be a part. Struck by the apparent happiness of Freddie and his wife, Vaughan writes:

at once I saw his happiness, vivid and remote, so far out of reach, so utterly exclusive that I felt an inseparable joy and sadness. Joy at the reminder that such things do exist on the earth. Sadness at my own exclusion both from a similar happiness and any share in or contribution to his happiness his happiness and a contribution to it. (27.07.42; J12, p.29)

In this journal entry – and in another subsequent two once Freddie is confirmed as leaving the Corps (30.07.42 & 04.08.42; J12, pp.32-3 & p.34) – Vaughan poignantly highlights the lack of an equivalent happiness for him, the lack of a socially sanctioned means of him declaring love for and living with a partner. Although he crosses through his suggestion of ‘a similar happiness’, his impression of a ‘vivid’ happiness that would be something worth reaching for does nothing to dismiss Freddie’s experiences or feelings in the way that Ted’s had been. Unlike the journal entry almost three years prior in which he had condescended Ted’s account of family life, Vaughan demonstrates magnanimity here in his declaration of ‘inseparable joy and sadness’; in doing so he effectively dramatizes his resignation not only of any hopes of involvement with Freddie but also of any hopes of being as happy as him. Even if Vaughan doesn’t explicitly reference animal characteristics or behaviour in this brief journal entry, the connection made to ‘earth’ associates Freddie’s happiness with being rooted in the biological as opposed to the cerebral. Freddie is not a subject for derision; instead, he and others like him are simply of another world.

Vaughan’s portrayals of those around him as simplistic can also be considered as the means by which to establish sexualized power over others with whom he wishes he could interact more successfully. Enthusing over Ted, one journal entry describes him as ‘gentle and simple’ and ‘gentle and lovable’, as if he were a pet, before Vaughan admits ‘my longing to bury my complexity in his

simplicity' (15.11.39; J2, pp.13-4); here the desire for contact becomes penetrative, domineering, and unmistakably sexual. In a lovelorn passage of his journal addressed to 'Stephen' (i.e. Ted), Vaughan again expresses a desire to penetrate a barrier between them by lamenting 'the impregnable defences' around the one he adores (30.12.39; J2, p.41). Writing of such barriers fetishizes the differences that Vaughan perceives between himself and others while justifying his alleged failures to successfully interact socially. In journal entries spanning 1940 we find the recurrent image of the 'citadel' in Vaughan's journal – an image that is initially used in a sexually aggressive context but that comes to reinforce the perception of barriers between people. Recalling his lacking the confidence to seduce a boy in a French hotel, Vaughan writes, 'I hadn't courage to storm his citadel' (31.01.40; J2, p.54). When reminiscing about taking a youth named Bobby to his favoured venue for seduction, Corfe in Dorset, Vaughan comments that, 'there was a solidity and self-confidence about him which left me frank and unafraid of hurting him. I stormed his citadel by force but my defeat was easy and inevitable' (08.03.40; J2, p.119). Although he claims they had 'a certain intellectual affinity to fall back on', Vaughan's correction in which he removes the prefix 'self' reduces Bobby's agency and makes their interaction a matter of Vaughan imposing his will. The metaphor of warring walled cities, of a siege-like approach to relations, conveys not only a sexualized, penetrative view of social relations but the need for Vaughan to protect his integrity. 'To be penetrated', Leo Bersani argues, 'is to abdicate power'<sup>17</sup>, and so while Vaughan fantasizes about dominating others he also takes care to patrol his own borders. In his account of a pre-war incident in which his friend Harold tried to sully his name, Vaughan describes the 'desperate efforts to tear down the citadel of my character' (11.03.40; J2, p.150). Consoling himself when admiring an attractive young corporal, he asserts, 'I can look on him fearlessly as from the battlements of my own citadel' (05.07.40; J3, p.208). By evoking the barrier of the citadel's walls again, Vaughan not only justifies the difficulties of interpersonal interaction but maintains a protective distance from which he can retain his ability to look and judge.

The desire to bury his 'complexity' in another man's 'simplicity' also reveals an undeniably class-related element to Vaughan's condescension of those with whom he wishes to be more socially or romantically involved; as Alan Sinfield somewhat understates it, 'The mysteries of the lower-class life may hold a

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<sup>17</sup> Leo Bersani, 'Is the Rectum a Grave?', in *Is the Rectum a Grave? and Other Essays* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp.3-30; p.19

fascination for the middle-class man.’<sup>18</sup> Judging from the treatment of ‘simple’ young men to whom he is attracted throughout the journal, E. M. Forster’s oft-quoted declaration could have been Vaughan’s own maxim: ‘I want to love a strong young man of the lower classes and be loved by him, and even hurt by him.’<sup>19</sup> Yorke acknowledges that Vaughan harboured ‘a romantic’s worship of the primitive at work [...] as well as a romantic’s self-dramatization of his own sensitivity’, and comments that, ‘Whilst invariably seeking his sexual pleasures down the social scale, he always retained a strong conviction that his true place in all other respects was with a well-bred intellectual élite.’<sup>20</sup> Thus the citadel is not merely a metaphor that solipsistically reinforces the notion of barriers between people but an edifying vantage point. Weeks writes of the materialist position in queer theory in which, ‘The erotic acts as a crossover point for a number of tensions whose origins are elsewhere: of class, gender and racial location, of intergenerational conflict, moral acceptability and medical definition.’<sup>21</sup> Vaughan’s pursuits of unavailable men can therefore be interpreted as wilfully transgressive acts that seek to transform social anxiety into something challenging and exciting.

Vaughan’s worship of the ‘primitive’ found an obvious outlet through his interest in distant tribal cultures. He enthuses over the ‘tall and lithe and amazingly beautiful’ tribesman brought to the screen in the film *Dark Rapture* (1938) which charts the Denis-Roosevelt Belgian Congo Expedition (23.02.40; J2, p.98). Beginning his recollections of the screening he attended with his brother by opining, ‘There was a tribe of men called giants’, Vaughan immediately makes them alluring through a process of mystification, describing them as ‘isolated from the world and time’. He eroticizes the ostensible simplicity of the tribesmen, effectively reducing them to appealing bodies: ‘Animals with the curious refinement of man. The perfection of manhood. Innocent and clean and sensitive like a boy. Perhaps all early men were this.’ (p.99) Closer to home, Vaughan’s fascination for what he perceived to be primitive helped him to maintain a distance from nearby social groups that offered both a sexualized, titillating perspective and another justification for his inability to participate socially. This is evident in an entry in which Vaughan bemoans experiencing the familiar concerns of enforced proximity and the violation of personal space: ‘This place is so very sordid and ugly [...] disgust and a dull hate is beginning to wear through.’ (01.10.39; J1, p.42) Such

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<sup>18</sup> Alan Sinfield, *On Sexuality and Power* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2004), p.140

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in A. L. Rowse, *Homosexuals in History* (London: Weidenfell and Nicolson, 1997), p.282

<sup>20</sup> Yorke, p.56

<sup>21</sup> Jeffrey Weeks, *Sexuality and its Discontents* (London: Routledge, 1985), p.44

proximity undermines his idealization of male physicality: 'This hateful lack of privacy all the time. A bedroom with five others, moaning belching farting all night.' (pp.42-3) In the same entry Vaughan revives his curiosity by writing excitedly of going into a café and observing a gang: 'they must have been from London I think by their hearty coarseness [...] the one with fair hair was nice looking – savage and catlike, and taut as wire' (p.44). The young men spill out on to the street, 'shattering the night with their animal laughter and shrieks', their raucous play involving grabbing at each other's genitals. Vaughan laments, 'I wanted to lose myself in their careless animality, to soak and drown my too dry senses with their heavy lust.' (p.45) Simon Oldfield recognizes that Vaughan, much like other homosexual male artists that emerged in the post-war period, often fixated on 'the borstal boy as a potent erotic type'<sup>22</sup>; in this journal entry we find early evidence as to the appeal of young delinquents. The gang are intimidating and inaccessible yet alluring for those reasons. The wilful self-denial in Vaughan's refusal to approach them and participate, reinforced by his written re-iteration of refusal in his journal, serves the dual purpose of making them seductively unattainable and making Vaughan a figure of admirable restraint. This is highly significant in the context of Vaughan having declared in his first ever journal entry his renunciation of 'the fairly easy solution of promiscuousness, and animality' (25.08.39; J1, p.10). He considered the withholding of sexual gratification to be of great interest and worthy of research, as we find in his remarks on reading of 'yogi who suspend and control the sexual orgasm and find in it a heightened and extended consciousness' (19.03.40; J2, pp.171-2). By figuring the gang of young men as savages he imbues them with exclusively sexual attributes while justifying his exclusion from their society as a matter of his own restraint.

Yorke notes Vaughan's own acknowledgement upon rereading T. E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1922) that there were 'obvious parallels between his own and Lawrence's simultaneous fear of other men's physicality and strong attraction towards it'.<sup>23</sup> Indeed Vaughan quotes from Lawrence directly in his journal – despite his manifold attacks on his character – on his fear of other men's 'animal spirits' and how they haunt him, remarking, 'Lawrence – how well I know what he felt. But here I am treated so very kindly. I am afraid even of that, to take so much from them undeserved' (01.12.39; J2, p.31). The mention of his comrades' kind explains Vaughan's need to fixate on gang members, reprobates and other

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<sup>22</sup> Simon Oldfield, 'Comparative Strangers', in *Francis Bacon*, ed. Matthew Gale and Chris Stephens (London: Tate Publishing, 2008), pp.64-73; p.73

<sup>23</sup> Yorke, p.55



figures on society's margins – figures who justified his distance from male society through their extreme behaviour and intimidating sexual allure. In some journal entries he expresses regret at the distance he has enforced between himself and others; considering his position as a conscientious objector, Vaughan watches a group of soldiers in a café and writes, 'I do not want any more to be superior and isolated. To act as though I was morally better and cleaner than these men [...] I would rather be foolish with the herd, just this once' (04.04.40; J3, p.1). Taking into account Vaughan's later disapproval of being treated like 'livestock' during a medical examination (22.04.40; J3, p.62), his reference to 'the herd' seems in all likelihood disparaging even in what is ostensibly a statement of contrition. John Carey explains how the populace were conceived of as herds, swarms, and bacteria amongst other things by a wide range of writers and commentators from the late nineteenth century into the twentieth, noting that 'Nietzsche's most common image of the mass is as a herd of animals'.<sup>24</sup> Vaughan bears the influence of this prevalent intellectual current when writing of having 'no established form of living, but sufficient latent [sic] impulse and desire to keep me from merging contentedly into the unthinking herd' (06.06.40; J3, p.127). He considers his position to be liminal yet still preferable to that of a majority who are untroubled and unquestioning; those characteristics were attributed to such subjects as Ted, so we understand that by conceiving of the majority to be similarly 'unthinking' Vaughan justifies his lack of social success. In a journal entry consisting almost entirely of a single long poem that turns from images of a grubby encampment to those of manual labourers and their nocturnal fumbings with increasingly sexualized fervour, he lauds the '[l]oveable headless life, this male-metalled, dirty vital ~~spot~~ place' (24.05.41; J6, p.7). Despite the condescending way in which Vaughan often wrote about even those who were friends and infatuations during wartime, there is a wistful quality to his idea of a 'headless' life ruled entirely by bodily demands that would be reflected in his visual work. Many of Vaughan's later wartime figures bear the influence of Henry Moore and are typically drawn with elongated torsos and tiny heads, bending their bodies gracefully and seductively like the mythic 'giants' Vaughan had worshiped in his journal.

While distancing himself from individuals around him and wider social groups, Vaughan cultivated through journal-writing the means of escape that he believed were available to him. Writing after having been spurned by 'Stephen' (i.e.

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<sup>24</sup> John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880-1939* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), pp.23-4 & p.24

Ted), he suggests that the only society that will admit him is that of the deceased or distant authors of literature:

Tonight in my folly I thought I could walk with easy familiar step with men [...] I was a fool not to know that their ranks are forever closed to me. For ever there opens before me the only road of escape and self realization the dark avenue of loneliness and my companions ghosts, dead letters, grey printed pages and the thoughts and deed of dead men. (30.12.39, J2, pp.38-9)

Vaughan claimed or expected an affinity with certain writers who he believed formed a canon of outsider literature. He resolves to 'read sometime [Henri-Frédéric] Amiel's *Journal* – on loneliness. To identify one's failures with another's. To recognise them in the people of fiction is to justify oneself in one's own eccentricity.' (21.11.39; J2, p.20) After signing a number of papers for medicals and with his tribunal only a few months away, Vaughan writes of being at Reading station: 'I thought duly of Oscar [Wilde] and found the station actually less depressing than I expected' (22.04.40; J3, p.59). In this instance, feeling as if he had 'somehow signed away part of myself into the machinery of the military', Vaughan draws reassurance from the thought of an artistic forebear whose strength of individual character constituted a defiant protest in the face of imminent institutionalization. When considering exile as a means by which to escape from the war situation and war society, he places himself in the company of 'Isherwood, Auden, Heard, and the other aesthetes', men who he has never met but who by writing about he can identify with (09.07.40; J3, p.212). Yorke recognizes Vaughan's expectation of belonging with an 'intellectual élite', yet in the first year of journal-writing this expectation was predominantly a fantasy of escape that masochistically predicted its own failure through identification with those who are deceased or otherwise distant.

Vaughan also cultivated through journal-writing the myth of a simple life away from modern male society. His friend Alan Ross recalls that 'Keith was by nature a stoic and a fatalist'<sup>25</sup>, so it is unsurprising that he dramatized in the journal his retreat to a rural idyll, in doing so conscientiously objecting to modern life itself. He imagines Cézanne returning from painting outdoors, 'the glow of achievement of wresting an order and a logic out of the chaos of nature' (10.03.40; J2, p.122). Imagining the artist's routine further, he notes wistfully, 'How well-ordered a life. How easily would the other parts assemble themselves round such a solid foundation.' In another entry he dreams of escaping his current situation to live and

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<sup>25</sup> Ross, p.xi

work on a farm but adds knowingly ‘again I suspect myself of following moonbeams’ (31.07.40; J3, p.228). Only days later, Vaughan entertains the fantasy of subsuming himself into a collective pursuing a noble endeavour. He begins: ‘At one time I might have worked all day with others’ company building Chartres, Vézelay, Rouen, worked with stone and chisel in the sunshine to ordered design’ (11.08.40; J4, p.2). This fantasy is appropriately impossible, evoking a distant and likely irretrievable model of society. In this secularized, Ruskinian vision of working on a cathedral<sup>26</sup>, the weight of individual responsibility is alleviated by a shared heritage and legacy as Vaughan imagines ‘adding my one small piece to a triumph which I knew would not be finished in my lifetime yet knew I could safely entrust to others to complete when I had gone’. The pre-industrial idyll of ‘[w]orking as a man should work with hands and skill and laughter’ corresponds to Vaughan’s romanticized notion of a simple life, albeit one that is refined to grant him two of the things he craves most: relief from loneliness (sharing a ‘dream’ with those he works alongside) and an audience (‘passers by would look up and smile and understand’). As part of a collective he imagines his role to be artistically edifying yet safe from pressure or critique through its relative anonymity. Having established this idyll, this journal entry diversifies to quote E.M. Forster – who is, according to Vaughan, ‘a bitter man [...] after my own heart’ – on the contemporary decline of values, to ask whether hope for a better future can be abandoned completely, and to call into question how much further he can develop as a person and in his ambitions (pp.5-7). Despite the ostensible diversity of these subjects their cumulative effect serves to call into doubt the effectiveness of individual effort in a world of increasingly stacked odds. Vaughan brings the notion of collective endeavour back into focus by admitting, ‘I long so much for people with whom I can cross minds’ (p.7). Declaring himself sadly unable to ‘grow up beyond twenty one’, he ties his concerns back to cathedral-building and the imagined solution of a grand shared project by resolving, ‘I must have a framework in which to build. I realize that I have never had that framework.’ (p.9) This entry dwindles to its close with a dissection by Vaughan of his failures to find a group with whom he could identify and collaborate. He maintains that he ‘wanted always the society of artists, but at art schools I found only people who sucked at my brains’ (p.11). Vaughan was not to know, however, that he would soon be admitted into cultured, artistic circles and his reaction would once again be complicated by his insecurities.

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<sup>26</sup> The examples that Vaughan gives of Chartres and Rouen suggest that he had read, or was at least familiar with, John Ruskin’s *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849).

In the journal entry dated the very next day, he recounts a thwarted opportunity to demonstrate the conviction of his conscientious objection and thus distinguish himself from the rest of society. With his tribunal looming, he had written that the prospect of it 'has a touch of the heroic, and romantic and is not therefore so dreadful', before claiming that, 'The romantic seems to be an essential ingredient of everything I broach' (06.06.40; J3, p.127). He was nevertheless self-aware enough to immediately note afterwards, 'I would rather it were not so, but cannot seem to do anything about it. My romanticism is incurable.' We cannot know whether this was indeed an expression of regret regarding his romanticizing tendencies or actually a justification of them as being beyond his control. What is certainly beyond doubt is the terrible disappointment he registered in his journal once the tribunal had failed to live up to his dramatic expectations. 'It was too easy', he laments, 'Much too easy. A complete anti-climax, as always when I play the lead' (12.08.40, J4, p.12). Of course the tribunal could never live up to Vaughan's absurdly heightened hopes: 'I kept repeating all the words and holding a vision of myself stepping down magnificently from the witness box with the court hushed with awe and respect' (p.13). It is unlikely that he genuinely expected such a grand and edifying scene, that he genuinely believed he could be 'like a martyr going to the stake'; instead, this journal entry dramatizes and exaggerates his expectations and in doing so transforms the disappointment itself into the grand drama that he was denied at the tribunal. Without a rapt or even vaguely interested audience, he makes himself the audience as he puts on a performance in writing. He attacks the members for not having been discerning enough, criticizing the 'comfortable middle aged men' who read his statement aloud in flat expressionless voices (p.14). Some conscientious objectors were submitted to more rigorous lines of questioning than others, but on the whole the testimonies collected by Goodall suggest that there was not the level of intimidation, aggression or conflict to justify the objectors' initial apprehensions.<sup>27</sup> A testimony from Edward Blishen who also had his tribunal in 1940 summarizes the general indifference of the tribunal boards: 'Objectors like myself who seemed to them to be philosophical objectors were not very well thought of, not regarded as very important – well we probably weren't – sort of adolescent philosophers.'<sup>28</sup> Vaughan writes of emerging from his tribunal session just five minutes later; registered for non-combatant duties, he describes feeling not relief but instead as if he had been 'cheated of something' (p.16). This journal entry becomes long and digressive yet returns bitterly towards its conclusion with an

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<sup>27</sup> Goodall, pp.97-104

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.102

attack on the 'incredible nonsense' he had overheard from other C.O.s when attending his tribunal (p.25). Vaughan deems them unworthy of defending the anti-war cause, perhaps unaware that tribunals were not a platform for rousing oratory or for the conversion of the tribunal members themselves but merely for the judgement of the 'sincerity' of the applicant when he put forward his view that he was 'in the right'<sup>29</sup>. Nevertheless, his writing of his tribunal and its aftermath serves to in some way salvage the occasion as the platform for his righteous display.

Arriving at Ilfracombe, Vaughan recorded in his journal that he had found 'kindred spirits' there (20.01.41: J5, p.5). Subjects of conversation amongst the men included 'music, painting, gardening, religion, literature', a list which approvingly suggests classicist tastes thanks to the grouping of gardening with such noble pursuits of philosophical import (p.6). In an entry wistfully titled 'Sometime in March', Vaughan enthuses that he has experienced 'the nearest I have got to living for a long time', and that he has 'come up against ideas, philosophies which are new to me' (J5, p.15). He declares that his comrades, including his friend Vic, are 'the future, the new horizon beyond the Waste Land'<sup>30</sup> (p.18), before daring to venture that, 'In many ways this is a prototype of the ideal, longed for society' (p.20). In a later entry he recalls conversations with Vic and Ron on 'everything from mysticism to homosexuality' (13.05.41; J6, p.1). Vaughan realizes 'the luxury of this life and its exclusiveness, its separation from the outer world of bombs and fear and agony' (p.2). He also met Norman Towne in Company 9 and found they admired many of the same artists, particularly Sutherland and Henry Moore; this resulted in a continued written correspondence.<sup>31</sup> Vaughan was initially stimulated by the talk and shared tastes of such companions yet there is every indication that he soon grew bored. One journal entry takes the form of an extended piece of poetic prose in order to contrast a lush, sexualized description of bulging, blooming summer munificence in the outside world with scenes of life in the camp that soon reveal a certain complacency or stagnation amongst the society there (16.06.41; J6, pp.20-3). 'We grew impatient at being always the same', Vaughan writes, before ending somewhat ominously with the news of their transfer in a highly ironic tone: 'Tomorrow to Codford [...] We hate it because we hate always change. We grew to like stewing in our own juices.' (pp.22-3) To paraphrase Proust, the only paradise is that which is now lost to us. Sure enough, Vaughan pined for the society of Bulford once in

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<sup>29</sup> Barker, p.5

<sup>30</sup> Vaughan's conversations regarding the literature of Eliot and other writers is addressed in the third chapter of this study.

<sup>31</sup> Yorke, pp.70-2

Codford, eulogizing the ‘distinct and clearly defined characteristic groups’ that had ‘now redissolved into [the] formless mass of the Ilfracombe days’ (26.06.41; J6, p.28). Vaughan lamented ‘the loss of individuals’ and the pruning of ‘growing contacts’ (21.07.41; J6, p.36), believing himself to have lived with ‘for the first time in my life with intellectual equals and superiors’ (p.38).

If Bulford only regained its lustre in retrospect, then one particular friendship excited Vaughan immediately, stoking both his ambitions and insecurities. Cosmo Rodewald was twenty-six when he and Vaughan met; although three years Vaughan’s junior he dazzled with his exceptional erudition, presenting not just intellectual consensus but often direct intellectual challenge.<sup>32</sup> Having discovered Cosmo’s Oxbridge connections Vaughan writes eagerly:

I have taken no steps to conceal from C [Cosmo] my desire of entry into the cultured circles in which he moves. Spender, [Peter] Watson, Freud, etc. It’s a longing I can never relinquish, the very intensity of which will keep me for ever ineligible. One must have something to offer, and I have nothing but boneheaded curiosity. The desire to see the half formed in myself completed in others. (25.08.41; J6, p.94)

His prediction of experiencing intellectual inferiority would prove to be a self-fulfilling prophecy; Cosmo introduced him to John Lehmann’s circle and Vaughan ultimately picked up some useful commissions, yet on a social basis he would remain a peripheral figure.<sup>33</sup> In a journal entry dated 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept 1941, Vaughan recounts a trip to Oxford spent in the company of Cosmo, Neville Coghill, and Peter Watson – ‘the adored, handsome and rather enigmatic young man who paid for the magazine [*Horizon*] and was its art editor’<sup>34</sup>. Yet a jubilant opening sentence, in which Vaughan recalls his return from Oxford ‘last night in a state of poised elation’, is crossed through; this may have been a decision made impulsively yet sincerely as his perspective on events soured while writing, or perhaps – judging from how this sentence is left clearly legible thanks to being drawn over with a large spiral resembling a telephone cord – one made as a deliberately dramatic gesture. Having described the society of his companions during the trip, Vaughan analyses their mannerisms before writing, ‘I realized several things about myself as a result of the day. The obvious shallowness of my critical perceptions in painting and lack of acquaintance and understanding generally in Art and Literature’ (J7, pp.20-1). Capitalizing the two disciplines in which he has found others’ knowledge intimidating, Vaughan inflates the scale of his self-perceived failure and possibly,

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp.66-7; p.68

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p.74

<sup>34</sup> Spender, *The Thirties and After*, p.87

ironically, the high tastes of those he sought to impress. Nevertheless there is palpable sincerity in the self-pitying passage that follows: ‘The absurdity of trying to meet people in their own ground always. To talk like a don with dons and connoisseur with connoisseurs. The resultant intense nervous strain and crumbling apart and vagueness of one’s own personality.’ (p.21) He dramatizes the disparity between himself and the cultural darlings with whom he is now socializing; Peter Watson, in his luxurious flat that is very much after Vaughan’s ‘own heart’, is presented ‘curled up catlike, purring, peterpanish, translating Gide’ while Vaughan himself is ‘shabby and awkward’ (16.05.42; J10, p.20). Watson seems to have behaved perfectly congenially with Vaughan and even introduced him to Graham Sutherland<sup>35</sup> before apparently losing interest in the absence of any amorous possibilities<sup>36</sup>, yet the ‘easy superiority’ with which he intimidates Vaughan, effectively turning his own weapon against him, leads the latter to declare in writing conclusively and dejectedly: ‘I can only feel comfortable now with people I dislike and do not at all care about impressing.’ (p.23)

Vaughan found his sense of superiority to be an inadequate defence in more cultured society. He could not condescend to envy ignorance because he was now fearful of his own. Unable to elevate himself through the creation of an *other* that was simple and unknowing, his response in journal-writing was to find fault with even those who he admired. For all of his contributions to the beloved Bulford society, Vic is called into question as someone whose ‘logic’ often presents too easy a solution, or the illusion of a solution, during conversations on lofty subjects (21.07.41; J6, p.39). Fearing that Cosmo, his friend and ‘last hope of escape into a world [of] congenial, elegant, and stimulating company’, may be transferred out, Vaughan takes the opportunity to list his apparent faults: ‘His bitterness, harshness and abrupt intolerant, condescending attitude towards people who irritate him [...] the implied attitude that neither we nor the army are good enough for him’ (15.01.42; J8, pp.30-1). Whether or not the company he kept exposed uncomfortable truths about his own less desirable character traits, Vaughan was regardless compelled to accentuate the deficiencies of others when roused by personal insecurities. He again cultivates fantasies of escape, imagining an idealistically secluded house for quiet ruminative living and largely solitary hedonism that evokes Des Esseintes’ lifestyle in Huysmans’ *À Rebours* (1884). Vaughan imagines a dimly-

<sup>35</sup> Vann with Hastings, p.56

<sup>36</sup> Peter was apparently mainly interested in his personal attractions [...] Without a sexual relationship Peter was not sufficiently interested in his [Vaughan’s] art to take notice of him, and he faded away from the Watson orbit.’; Adrian Clark and Jeremy Dronfield, *Queer Saint: the Cultured Life of Peter Watson* (London: John Blake, 2015), pp.194-5

lit cocoon of a library and a whole series of rooms devoted to predominantly auto-erotic experimentation, foreshadowing his middle-aged existence as a sexually indulgent shut-in (10.04.42; J9, pp.22-5). Another entry predicts his retreat from life and even lays out the conditions that would justify it when he asserts that, 'No one need bother to live today after 30 unless he has some reasonable prospect of achieving in some degree greatness' (26.02.42; J8, p.75). He continues by giving himself an ultimatum: 'At the most I give myself 5 years to become in some degree great. After that my only hope for greatness would lie in my ability to remove myself.' While the world of heteronormative male society was represented in his journal as 'the herd', animalistically simple yet threatening, so the cultured company of intellectuals would be portrayed as capricious and intimidating. In response Vaughan continued to cultivate fantasies of escape that sought either seclusion or idealized and irretrievably distant societies (a propensity that throws his recourse to idealizations of classical culture into sharp relief). In each case the difficulties of making contact, of making what he could be satisfied were genuine attachments, resulted in Vaughan turning to his journal and recording his interactions so as to emphasize and maintain the distance between him and his fellow man, thus reinforcing his self-dramatized and often masochistically romanticized position as an outsider.

### **iii. Looking and Being Looked At**

From its first volume the journal offers a record of Vaughan's powers of perception. In an early passage on the excavation works undertaken as London braces itself for war, Vaughan describes the great steam shovellers at work on the heath:

Familiar hummocks and bushes which I had noticed and past [sic] by often, not questioning their permanence, torn up, pitted, scarred with steel caterpillars and now it is a strange nightmare landscape, filled with the shriek and clang of chains and pulleys, dim in a mist of dust and smoke. (30.08.39; J1, pp.15-6)

This passage makes clear what could be achieved in writing as opposed to in a visual medium. What is most notable in this scene isn't what is directly observable but what *used* to be observable: the old familiar scene that is currently in the process of being uprooted and destroyed. Even the spectacle of destruction, the undoing of a previous picture, is not the most arresting aspect of this scene – it is the terrible noise that Vaughan relays and the difficulty of seeing anything at all. In the final



entry of the first volume, he describes a bus journey during which he overcomes various circumstances – fading light, a steamed bus window, the all-pervading ‘autumnal grey’ – in order to take in his surroundings (15.10.39; J1, p.68). This scene attempts to render in language effects that could not be captured in a single image. This relatively short passage not only describes non-visual phenomena such as hissing car wheels and splashing water but relays a series of impressions across the spectrum of the senses. Vaughan writes, ‘Houses stood motionless, dripping, steaming, words faded shapeless shadows into the ubiquitous damp mist’. This sensual experience is enigmatic and ephemeral, the account of it an experiment in depicting an individual’s struggle to pick apart various stimuli. Given that this passage closes the first volume of Vaughan’s journal, in which he declared his anti-war stance and began to divulge his social awkwardness, it seems to negotiate a position or role for the self-professed outsider: an observer looking out at the world, striving to capture its scenes and his own responses.

When presented with a more fixed, stable view, Vaughan wrote confidently of his observations as if from behind the easel. While wartime conditions limited the availability of necessary materials, as evidenced by Vaughan’s recourse to drawing small studies in small pads, journal-writing presented an opportunity to render scenes with fewer restrictions. A detailed description of a rural landscape, dwelling with an artist’s eye on composition and colour, incorporates the undulations of hills in ‘wave after wave’, the clusters of farm buildings and woods, and even the lighting provided by the sun filtered ‘in fine shafts of light which poured over sections of the distance and drew slow veils darkly across the foreground’ (05.03.40; J2, p.107). Noting that the soil is ‘rich and chalky and dry’ pertains to its texture and by extension the materials in which any recreation should be rendered (p.107), while the placing of a ‘vast white ochre sweep’ and the ‘brushing’ of a ‘faded velvet gold’ by the sun over wooded crests suggests the necessary motions of brushwork (p.107; 110). The language of painting suffuses this passage, not only offering instruction for its translation into a single, coherent image but also refiguring the scene in terms that bestow the powers of artistic perception and potency upon the observer. It is the observer himself who commands the scene, as Vaughan describes the earth arriving obediently ‘in a clean unbroken sweep to my feet’ (p.110). In a flourish of symbolism, Vaughan even includes a boy loosening harnesses from horses, an allusion perhaps to the rose-period Picasso *Boy Leading a Horse* (1906) and the Spanish artist’s own allusion to Mantegna’s *Parnassus* (1497) in the Louvre, placing him in a noble lineage of masters. The spectacle provided by landscape was a continued source of inspiration for Vaughan: ‘the sun broke through thick and misty

clouds and streaked the countryside with gold. For the first time I remembered the desire to paint again. The combinations of colours, textures, linked up with Surrey and Sussex.’ (13.02.41; J5, p.13) Recording these impulses in his journal not only reinforced the power of the scene but primarily the power of his reactions and perceptiveness.

Anxieties as to one’s ability to look surface in Vaughan’s accounts of interacting in male society and are often portrayed as forbidden or thwarted attempts. He recounts observing a gold-haired youth while he and some fellow ambulance volunteers on night manoeuvres light cigarettes in a trailer. He watches as ‘the light flicked across his cheek and the heavy curve of his chin’ (11.11.39; J2, p.12). Vaughan figures himself as somewhat of a predatory onlooker, situating himself ‘very near, invisible in the darkness’. Expressing the desire he had felt for the young man, Vaughan writes that he was ‘restless to broach some contact but dared not [...] Sometimes our hands touched [...] But the barrier remained intact’. Requests for the lighting of a cigarette were one of the few coded yet ‘recognized approaches’ available to homosexual men in this period.<sup>37</sup> Such coded behaviours had been knowingly incorporated into images by homosexual artists, as in Paul Cadmus’ notoriously ribald, frieze-like composition *The Fleet’s In!* (1934) in which a dandyish figure to the left of the picture (identifiable as homosexual, Weinberg argues, due to the conventional symbolism of a red neck-tie) offers a light.<sup>38</sup> For Vaughan, the significance of the lighting of the cigarette was the opportunity to engage with another on the terms he desired; as a result, the significance of the episode in his journal is that even in such a circumstance he still cannot make contact, the ‘barrier’ remaining unbreachable. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the poignancy of such a scene for Vaughan accounted for the fact that a study of a soldier helping another to light a cigarette was one of the first images that he developed fully in oils immediately after the war ended. As Simon Martin confirms, ‘Vaughan’s paintings often seem to express a longing for a connection of some kind: the lighting of a cigarette, the holding of hands, but what is often conveyed is a sense of difficulty in connecting’.<sup>39</sup> While dramatizing his distance from male society, Vaughan sought to look and to record his observations as the record of his looking.

<sup>37</sup> Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p.47

<sup>38</sup> Jonathan Weinberg, *Speaking for Vice: Homosexuality in the Art of Charles Demuth, Marsden Hartley, and the First American Avant-Garde* (London: Yale University Press, ‘Yale Publications in the History of Art’, 1993), pp.32-7

<sup>39</sup> Simon Martin, ‘Figure in a Landscape’, in *Pallant House Gallery Magazine*, no.26, March-June 2012, pp.19-21; p.20

Landscape spread out before him, Vaughan was confident of his observational powers, of being able to *look*; when anxieties arise surrounding his ability to look they coincide with his social and emotional insecurities. Fresh from romantic disappointment and his declaration that his only companions henceforth will be ‘ghosts’, Vaughan calls himself ‘[a]n exiled onlooker on life pressing my face against the glass while my tears and hot breath cloud it over and mist out the spectacle before my eyes’ (30.12.39; J2, p.39). One of Vaughan’s earliest intimations of artistic purpose in the journal follows his account of wishing he could join the society of some soldiers he is observing in a café: ‘I want to watch life and absorb it and recreate it in art. I am not designed to lead men in a cause.’ (04.04.40; J3, p.3) Frustrations with social interaction sometimes manifested as images or metaphors of impaired vision, some of which found their way into his visual work; in an untitled ink sketch of an encampment overshadowed by oppressive dark skies, a figure in the foreground bears a grave expression and his eyes are struck through by a long horizontal line whilst a vortex of claustrophobic spirals swirls about him.<sup>40</sup>

Because his looking at other men to whom he was attracted had to be predominantly clandestine, Vaughan lauds his own predatory prowess when observing or actively seeking out beautiful young men in public. He recalls sheltering from the cold in a café when suddenly, ‘the door flung open and a soldier came and sat at the first seat. I turned slightly, skilfully in my chair to see him, he was pleasant and crude looking, he sucked down his tea staring angrily at the table’ (26.10.39; J1, p.2). Figuring himself as superior yet underappreciated, and therefore unseen, Vaughan begins to construct through such accounts his identity as an observer as one borne from necessity but only successful through skill and perceptiveness. In an entry recording observations made in a Lyons tea house (always a favourite public space in which to station himself) Vaughan enthuses that he ‘had forgotten the spectacle of [the] tragic beauty of daily living’ (18.03.40; J2, p.169). He focusses on a boy sat facing another man at a table nearby, admiring the ‘hard impulsive vitality in his face’. He elaborates on the amber colour of his skin, his thick black hair, and in particular on his mouth which was ‘loose and soft and curved beautifully’ (p.170). He takes care to note that his front teeth were ‘broken in a V’, an interesting quirk, and summarizes his impression of the boy as a sense of ‘animal savage attraction which hit me between the legs’. Just as the soldier in a previous entry had been ‘crude looking’, so this youth appeals to Vaughan’s primitivist gaze as he seeks out interesting specimens. Looking about him for those

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<sup>40</sup> Untitled ink sketch (catalogued by Tate as 1941-2), held at Tate Archive, London, catalogue ref: TGA9013/1/26

he finds beautiful or intriguing or grotesque, it is easy to imagine Vaughan in the same terms as Walter Pater imagined Leonardo da Vinci: in search of ‘extremes of beauty and terror’ and ‘catching glimpses of it in the strange eyes or hair of chance people’, following his subjects and sketching them.<sup>41</sup>

Vaughan would defiantly claim that he did not actively desire to look at those around him in the Corps: ‘There are beautiful people here. Beautiful to look at and to know. But my eyes search for them and follow them only from the mechanics of habit, and not from inner compulsion.’ (12.01.41; J5, pp.3-4) Yet, as John Berger asserts, ‘We only see what we look at. To look is an act of choice. As a result of this act, what we see is brought within our reach – though not necessarily within arm’s reach.’<sup>42</sup> Despite Vaughan’s claims that looking was only a matter of habit, an involuntary and meaningless reaction, we discover from his journal that looking was indeed a way of bringing those around him closer – and sometimes under his control. In the entry in which he bemoans the anti-climactic experience of his tribunal, Vaughan’s rumination on whether there is truly a shared cause in war leads straight into an emphatic description of sunbathing soldiers: ‘brown bodies lying in the sun, brown skin and khaki trousers [...] looking oh so lovely yes like lotus eaters, like the song of the sirens – ~~calling~~ beckoning with their bodies and strong arms’ (12.08.40, J4, p.19). Vaughan uses the affirmation ‘oh so lovely yes’ to recreate his act of looking as if it were unfolding in the act of writing; by capturing this moment in his journal he empowers himself to re-look once again, transforming the soldiers into the mythical creatures of his fancy. Dismayed by the indifference that he perceived from the tribunal members, Vaughan’s writing performs a consolatory function in granting him power – the power to look and re-look – over those soldiers who are the very agents (or, at least, property) of the political establishment. The correction of ‘calling’ is also revealing as the soldiers no longer have voices but are instead ‘beckoning’ with their bodies alone, asking him to assume control and affirm their existence by looking at them. This written record of transformative looking also consoles the failure to capture the scene in a single image; when revisiting the spectacle of the soldiers on a later page of the same entry he voices his dismay at not being able to ‘go out and paint those greens and browns and ochres and black’, at being denied the opportunity to transform his act of looking into something as physically tangible and personally edifying as an artistic product (p.21).

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<sup>41</sup> Pater, p.59

<sup>42</sup> John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 2008), p.1

Aware of the often-predatory nature of looking, Vaughan reveals his insecurities about being looked at. He imagines the sustained gaze of others putting him under intense scrutiny: 'I see the details and furnishings of my life through the eyes of spectators and I am ashamed of being the person they reveal me to be. I am unwilling to admit that I am this person.' (21.11.39; J2, p.19) The desire to not be looked at would consequently manifest itself in Vaughan's visual work. An untitled drawing of two men in conversation is representative of Vaughan's penchant for substituting eyes for great dark hollows.<sup>43</sup> The figure at the back of the scene facing outward cannot be adjudged to be looking back at us yet their field of vision is disconcertingly indeterminate, skewing an otherwise innocuous social scene with a sense of paranoia. The gaze of Vaughan the artist need not be reciprocated as the fact that his subjects have been transformed is affirmation enough of his existence and powers. In a journal entry that recounts the scene of a boy sitting for him for several hours, Vaughan makes a minor but revealing correction. This is a boy who Vaughan confesses he wished to kiss, a boy whose name is scrubbed out entirely in marker pen. He enthuses over the boy's 'very sad and lovely face', remarking that he 'drew it often and the image of it is firmly engraved in my mind – it is elusive and subtle like the faces of all young animals – ~~the eyes are~~ soft and tender eyes, puzzled [...]' (04.10.39; J1, p.55). By making this correction the boy's eyes are deprived of their agency – they 'are' not anything, nor have they any opportunity to act as they are only defined by the observer's description of them as 'soft and tender', adjectives that suggest they are prone and yielding, incapable of decisive action. An untitled ink sketch from Vaughan's period at Bulford depicts a young man in profile; the sitter's eyes are concealed from view, either downcast or closed.<sup>44</sup> Meanwhile, Vaughan has paid somewhat uncharacteristic attention to the detail of the face, lingering over its soft lines and emphasizing his subject's long, graceful nose and particularly full lips. He is there exclusively to be looked at. Indeed, Vaughan consistently deprives his subjects of the ability to look outward. In notable contrast, a contemporaneous untitled self-portrait shows Vaughan with eyes that recognizably look out at us, an assertion that only the artist himself, and not his subject, possesses the full power of vision.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> 'Untitled drawing of two men in caps in conversation' (catalogued as 1939-45), held at Tate Archive, London, catalogue ref: TGA9013/1/11

<sup>44</sup> Untitled sketch (dated by artist 31<sup>st</sup> Jan 1942), held at Tate Archive, London, catalogue ref: TGA9013/1/35

<sup>45</sup> Untitled self-portrait (catalogued by Tate as 1941-2), held at Tate Archive, London, catalogue ref: TGA9013/1/29

The reciprocation of, or response to, a gaze did nevertheless become more important to Vaughan as he developed his attitudes to being looked at in his journal. Initially, he expresses dissatisfaction with a brief returned gaze; agonizing over someone whose attention he wished to attract, Vaughan complains that:

A glance is not enough. It is an agony of doubt, a glance can mean anything, it is a blank canvas for the colours of my own desires. Sometimes I wish there were no more beautiful people about and I could find peace. (03.08.40; J3, p.244)

Henning Bech affirms that the homosexual gaze need not 'always be used as a means to achieve *further* contact. It becomes enough in itself; from being a means of contact, it becomes the end. The reciprocal glancing turns into *the* contact.'<sup>46</sup> In the excerpt above Vaughan is dissatisfied by the brevity of the contact – after all, a glance is different to a gaze – yet even in his dissatisfaction he acknowledges the 'blank canvas' that this level of interaction affords him. Bech elaborates upon the importance of the gaze to male homosexual desire and its advantages, not least that one can avoid 'the countless risks of error and repulsion that may arise if you have to listen to each other, smell each other, have sex, wake up together; it's not nearly so strenuous. Besides, it offers its own rewards: pleasure, excitement, affirmation.'<sup>47</sup> For a committed fantasist such as Vaughan, the opportunity to paint his desires onto a blank canvas rather than risk the whole gamut of interpersonal insecurities seems to have grown in appeal. Writing of observing a boy in a café, he records the excitement that can be gleaned from only a glance:

'The gaze of eyes deep brown crossing mine only for a moment, passing through and beyond me, a Tadzio glance<sup>48</sup>, beconing [*sic*], or seeming to beckon, a gaze that was arresting in its quiet deep animal confidence after the fussy egotistical self importance of most people here.' (24.04.41; J5, pp.39-40)

In later journal entries, the returned gaze finally becomes a matter of triumph, a quietly edifying result in itself. 'I looked at Bill several times and smiled and he looked at me', he writes affectionately, 'It was a spontaneous smile that one makes when [...] one is glad they are there at that particular moment' (28.08.41; J6, pp.103-4). Here, Vaughan's (facial) expression of happiness is given affirmation by

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<sup>46</sup> Henning Bech, *When Men Meet: Homosexuality and Modernity*, trans. Teresa Mesquit and Tim Davies (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), p.106

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> This is likely an allusion to the character of the same name in Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* (1912) and the 'beckoning' final glance with which he looks back at Aschenbach, 'the watcher'; Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice and other Stories*, trans. David Luke (London: Vintage, 2001), p.265

Bill bearing witness and a complete and satisfying interaction is adjudged to have taken place.

The urban environment, however, would continue to threaten Vaughan with the prospect of an unwanted reciprocation of his gaze. Upon returning to London after an eight month absence, he writes that the city is full of people who are merely 'brittle shells of humanity their hollow futility shouting to heaven' (09.05.40; J3, p.92); being empty, the barriers around them are not figured as worth breaching. His disapproval of London extends beyond a mere matter of overcrowding; many hotspots for homosexual activity were the busiest areas of London, including Piccadilly, where Vaughan picked up rent boys on occasion, and Charing Cross, which was 'the center of queer life for much of the early twentieth century'<sup>49</sup>. For Vaughan, London was a city of temptations and dangers, requiring him to maintain a reassuring distance from it and its people by writing of his disgust. He would continue to cultivate a difficult relationship with the city, for as Bech asserts:

The city is the social world proper of the homosexual, his life space [...] The city, with its crowds of mutual strangers, is the place where the homosexual can come together with others; and – at the same time and for the same reasons – it is the place that confirms his loneliness.<sup>50</sup>

Being able to look is a source of power, and in the case of the rent boys and rough trade of the city it posed a threat by reciprocating Vaughan's gaze and thus confirming his loneliness. He writes of young male prostitutes and their street-walking clients in a way that denies them the opportunity to look back at him, whether that be alluringly or accusatorily. Observing men loitering on pavements waiting to pick up at such locations as Piccadilly station, Vaughan depicts their faces as featureless, having 'the empty beaten look of addicts' (07.12.40; J4, p.101). Without the power or the agency to look back at Vaughan they cannot testify to his presence in the very same districts that he condemns as seedy. Conversely, in the same journal entry Vaughan enjoys the power of being able to look at a denizen of this world. Having taken a sixteen-year-old prostitute to supper at a Lyons tea house, Vaughan enjoys the experience and is calmed by the superiority he feels over the boy: 'I realized I could look at him across the table with something near disgust and revulsion. I was glad of that experience.' Vaughan dwells on this scene in his journal, noting that the boy 'ate disgustingly and he was dirty but his eyes were nice and he was 16' (p.104); although this boy is described with eyes they are

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<sup>49</sup> Houlbrook, p.123

<sup>50</sup> Bech, p.98

nevertheless relegated to being merely ornamental, decorative features to be enjoyed by whoever is looking at him. In a later entry Vaughan revisits the street-walkers of London, describing the 'hunters' seeking male prostitutes (again around Piccadilly Circus tube) as being 'as much beggars as the professed beggars that accompany them' (16.05.42; J10, p.31). He distances himself from such scenes by implicitly contrasting his own powers of observation, evidenced by his ability to produce a written record from memory, with those of the figures lurking in the shadows of the London Pavilion 'straining their eyes at the darkness of a passing face' (p.32). While their vision is impaired, Vaughan is able to see the rent boys for what they are: 'painted powdered, diseased looking youths' (p.33). Once again, writing in this way has a protective function by creating a power gulf between those who can look and those who cannot.

By convincing himself that the members of this nocturnal milieu could not look back at him, Vaughan attempted to deny the possibility of surveillance. Weeks writes of the dangers posed by the authorities in response to increased public and governmental anxiety over homosexual activity: 'During the 1930s, particularly, homosexual offences became a particular preoccupation of the Public Morality Council [...] from the 1930s there began what was to become a major trend of increasing prosecutions on a national scale.'<sup>51</sup> The degree to which guilt and paranoia suffused Vaughan's perception of homosexual liaisons in urban environments is suggested by two concurrent journal entries: the first in which he describes a sexual conquest whilst on leave, and the entry that immediately follows. Vaughan writes of his conquest, a 'Roland Boulanger'<sup>52</sup>, in a rich and sensuous style that aims to preserve the beauty of his subject's body: 'Hands carry the perfume of his skin, the pressed sheets hold the weight and alabaster smoothness of his limbs. Eyes carry his various distinct images at different moments, each separate, not yet fused to the general composite image of memory.' (25.08.42; J13, p.7) Vaughan claims that his conquest's facial features are 'perfectly easy to see' and continues by exalting his flawless body; in this respect, he has recorded the fruits of this liaison, taking (almost) all that he wanted. In the next entry, written once Vaughan had returned to the encampment from leave, he conjures a nightmarish vision of male prostitutes at familiar haunts:

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<sup>51</sup> Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: the Regulation of Sexuality since 1800* (London: Longman, 1981), p.220

<sup>52</sup> Considering that 'boulanger' is the French for 'baker', it may well be that this name was codified either by Vaughan or even by the man who went by it.



Sirens in the moon gardens. V necks, black hair, and two bone caverns in the skulls where eyes like beasts crouch and wait for their prey [...] And the faces, grey featureless tablets awaiting the imprint from the fevered brain [...] I do not know whether of my own volition I could escape the pack of doomed and hungry hunters. I have seen the agony of a thousand nights bitten into the bloodless faces of drinkers at the Swiss bar. (27.08.42; J13, pp.11-2)

Whether ‘Roland Boulanger’, the conquest described by Vaughan in the previous entry, was rough trade or a street-walker is not what is important here – what is important is that Vaughan in the subsequent journal entry is clearly seeking to dissociate himself from what he perceives to be the seedy and predatory nature of the urban homosexual experience. The uses of vision by him and the nocturnal hunters are effectively juxtaposed; his vision is concerned with preserving the experience of beauty, whereas theirs is parasitic, vampiric, feeding off desire to potentially destructive effect. By distancing himself across concurrent journal entries from the perceived evils of this intimidating world, Vaughan goes some way towards alleviating the burden of illegality and any resultant feelings of transgression and guilt.

Vaughan’s pictures of men in the barracks have an elegiac quality that makes them perfect exemplars of his interest in the male body, his problems with making contact in male society, and the fraught necessity of his covert looking. Yorke writes of Vaughan’s comrades that ‘when they climbed up on bunks and wriggled under blankets, Vaughan continued to draw them from the comfort of his own bunk’.<sup>53</sup> He dwelt and practised much on this subject, for ‘[t]hese works, offering intimate glimpses of a cosy men-only world, are increasingly skilful in their technique’.<sup>54</sup> There is a beautiful series of black-and-white gouaches, heavily shaded to suggest night-time, in which men in the barracks predominantly have their backs turned to the viewer.<sup>55</sup> In these gouaches the men are being admired longingly, but in another image the observer makes his own way into the composition. In *Barrack Room – Sleep (1)* (1942), a bunk bed provides the frame of the image with figures lying asleep across the top and bottom edge; through this frame we see, against the far wall in the shadows, a male figure sat looking back at us.<sup>56</sup> This shadowy figure, sat serenely amongst his sleeping companions is the artist himself reflected in his own image, for unlike his comrades he has eyes that resolutely look out of the picture at

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<sup>53</sup> Yorke, p.66

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Series entitled ‘Barrack Room’ (1942) held at Tate Archive, London, catalogue ref: TGA200817/3/1/12/3-5

<sup>56</sup> Held at Tate Archive, London, catalogue ref: TGA200817/3/1/12/7

us. This conclusion is supported by Vaughan's suggestion of a similar reflection in his placing of the farthest figure in a group composition entitled *Soldiers Bathing*, Malton (1944).

The bathing picture would, in the post-war years, replace the wartime visions of barrack rooms and outdoor labour as Vaughan's vision of male society. Writing on the prevalence of the female bathing picture across the spectrum of artistic tastes and registers, Linda Nochlin explains their escapist appeal: 'they are smooth, fetching, playful, relaxed, and strenuously removed from any context that would suggest either their contemporaneity or the realities of urban existence, including the existence of the opposite sex.'<sup>57</sup> When we consider how Vaughan's bathers were always male, we appreciate that inverting the bathing picture's conventional sexual politics appealed to his own perspective on male society: a perspective that idealized the constituent bodies but that decontextualized and depersonalized them in its formation of a male-only myth. The nude male subject in painting had been popularized in Northern Europe from the late nineteenth century as an image of masculinity that endorsed athleticism, health, hygiene, and comradeship<sup>58</sup>; these were, however, values that corresponded to a particular political or social agenda. By decontextualizing his male bathers, thus ridding them of their status as soldiers, athletes, or indeed anything else, Vaughan claimed them from such political and social purposes as dictated the masculine stereotype and to which he had objected so strongly in his anti-war writing. Adopting the more subtly erotic influence of Cézanne's male bathers and further abstracting their surroundings, and thus the context for their assemblage, Vaughan made the gathering of male bodies for its own sake his subject. From a perspective of self-imposed distance, established and reinforced through writing in his journal of failures to interact successfully with other men, Vaughan positioned himself as being outside of male society. Yet by writing of his powers of perception he constructed his identity as an observer of male society who could look upon its constituent bodies and their dynamics. And if, as Berger claims, 'Men look at women' while '[w]omen watch themselves being looked at'<sup>59</sup>, then when the painter's subjects are men they are not aware or expectant of the voyeur's longing gaze. The bathing picture proved the perfect medium for Vaughan's post war visual practice as it indulged his ability to look upon

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<sup>57</sup> Linda Nochlin, *Bathers, Bodies, Beauty: the Visceral Eye* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), p.19

<sup>58</sup> Patricia G. Berman, 'Body and Body Politic in Edvard Munch's *Bathing Men*', in *The Body Imaged: the Human Form and Visual Culture since the Renaissance*, ed. Kathleen Adler and Marcia Pointon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.71-83; pp.77-8

<sup>59</sup> Berger, p.41

the male body while allowing him to do so from a perspective – detached, elegiac, seeing yet unseen – that he had established through his wartime journal-writing.

**CREATOR**

### 3. Autobiography and the Intellectual

This study has thus far followed two major threads running through Vaughan's wartime journal-writing: his anti-war arguments, through which he began to construct his identity as an objector; and the accounts of his social and romantic struggles that cast him in the role of an observer. These threads of his journal-writing consolidated the subject matter of his future visual practice, the young male body, and informed the detached, elegiac perspective from which he would sketch and paint this subject. This study now turns to Vaughan's construction of his identity as a creative individual by following the development of his journal-writing as a creative process – and, therefore, as his first major creative work – through which he could give literary shape to his memories and experiences.

The first section of this chapter charts the development of the journal as a consciously literary autobiographical project, taking the third volume, dated from 4<sup>th</sup> April to 9<sup>th</sup> August 1940, to be a distinct milestone with respect to Vaughan's recognition of the purposes and possibilities of journal-writing. The third volume established many of the key formats and features of the journal whilst exhibiting a greater critical awareness of the challenges of writing. Perhaps most importantly, the third volume proved highly significant as a document that was designed to be re-read, as a tool for navigating and making sense of the past and giving direction to the future. In experimenting with autobiographical writing – that is, the writing of specific episodes from his past – Vaughan was able to situate memories and experiences in a narrative of his life so far and to begin to map a destiny as a creative individual. The second section of this chapter focusses on how Vaughan, equipped with greater control as a journal-writer, embarked on a programme of self-education that encompassed the reading of other life-writers and the discovery of modern (and modernist) works by such key figures as T. S. Eliot and Marcel Proust. Vaughan attempted in his journal-writing to appreciate and critique such literary works whilst incorporating their influence, constructing through his record of discoveries a new aspect of his identity with which he would struggle: that of the intellectual. Having reached the point where Vaughan's literary education was prompting creative anxiety and disillusionment, this chapter concludes in its third section by evidencing the enduring importance of the journal to its author as a continuous autobiographical document to be referred back to and re-evaluated during periods of duress.

## i. An Autobiographical Project

The first two volumes of Vaughan's journal, covering the period between August 1939 and April 1940, only exhibit on rare and brief occasions their author's awareness of journal-writing as a practice. In the first volume, while acknowledging how prone he is to 'complacency' when presented with home comforts (11.10.39; p.58), Vaughan does seem to incriminate the journal when he expresses concern at having 'turned to [*sic*] far inwards now that I get greater satisfaction from introvertive pleasures than contact with the outer world' (p.60). In the second volume, we find the suggestion of a more positive outlook on journal-writing:

I am getting to know myself better now. Or rather to accept the truth that I have long known about myself. Sometimes I feel I am getting within reasonable distance of collecting the threads of existence [*sic*] and thought together and evolving finally my life philosophy. (19.03.40; pp.176-7)

This passage contains a notably early instance of the recurrent image of 'thread', which used here in the context of 'collecting' confirms Vaughan's desire for a means to cohere disparate elements of his 'thought'. The phrase 'life philosophy' is also significant here in gesturing towards a unified narrative that will provide, definitely and 'finally', a shape to his memories, experiences, and ambitions. At this point in the journal, however, the notion of a sustained and consciously constructed narrative remains vague and undefined.

In size alone the third volume signals a newfound intent. The clothbound notebook in which Vaughan chose to write the third instalment of his journal contains almost three hundred pages, making it the largest of all the volumes he had written so far and ultimately would write during wartime. The first entry of this volume, dated 4<sup>th</sup> April 1940, begins in deceptively familiar fashion, with Vaughan's observations of a scene in a café followed by further considerations of his stance on conscientious objection. On the fourth page, however, Vaughan moves away from these familiar subjects to deliver a full and eloquent declaration that his journal-writing will give shape and meaning to his life thus far: 'I want to write an autobiography of my life to date [...] to die without leaving any record or achievement seems waste'. In this statement he, somewhat contrary to the sentiment expressed in his first ever journal entry, recognizes value in his past experiences whilst emphasizing the need to produce an enduring testament to them. The organizing principles that Vaughan employs from the third volume onwards,

which are detailed and analysed in this chapter, confirm that his use of the word 'autobiography' refers not to a proposed life-writing project outside of the journal but to a refiguring of the journal itself whereby it becomes precisely the kind of sustained narrative to which he had previously alluded. Indeed, he clarifies in a decidedly more maudlin entry later in the third volume that '[t]he purpose of this autobiography', referring to the journal, 'is to try and understand and account for my failure in life' (01.06.40; p.118). We must therefore consider the third volume of Vaughan's journal to be the point at which he first acknowledged the journal's potential as an all-encompassing autobiographical project.

Vaughan's declaration of purpose in the first entry of the third volume continues with a resolution that, 'the record must be as complete and intimate and brutally honest as memory allows. There must be no censorship of values'. Considering the difficulties Vaughan had as a homosexual man in even being able to record his experiences privately, such a resolution can be considered as somewhat of a cathartic unburdening, particularly as what follows constitutes an admission as to what he had previously deemed unsuitable for the pages of a journal and a commitment to addressing it. He admits: 'I still have [...] a feeling of nausea for much of my past living but I will not let it prevent my writing these things' (p.5). This is immediately followed by the announcement that:

Sex has been paramount in my life and my biography must necessarily appear obsessed with this subject because it has been and still is an obsession with me [...] I think that by bringing it into the uncompromising fixity of words I may loosen hold of the obsession.

It is worth scrutinizing this professed faith in the 'uncompromising fixity of words' further. Perhaps the prospect of their permanence proved too problematic when Vaughan re-read the words that followed, for the bottom half of this same page has been removed taking with it text from both sides and therefore cutting off a passage (overleaf on p.6) mid-sentence. The desire for fixity, the kind of finality proposed in the entry quoted above from 19<sup>th</sup> March 1940, could also, for a man in Vaughan's position, prove compromising in another more urgent sense, especially considering his decision to write the third volume of his journal in a notebook conspicuously larger than those used previously and with such statements coming in its opening pages. Whatever his anxieties surrounding possible incrimination, Vaughan takes care to distinguish the 'fixity of words' from a process of writing that is too rehearsed, and therefore overly mediated, by its author; 'It gives me no pleasure at all to write about this', he confesses after the text that was removed, 'I am doing it dully and automatically yet with a certain satisfaction that words are covering the

paper more or less in step with my thoughts' (p.6). He clarifies immediately that '[i]t is subconscious writing, unpremeditated, unselective. Not [...] the distilled and refined me of conscious writing but a cross section at a given moment of time'. With this clarification in mind, it seems that Vaughan was not interested in fixing his words into a final product through the action of writing, but rather in fixing thoughts into a record written for the purpose of being read. As this chapter will elaborate upon, his autobiographical writing was largely premeditated in subject, with certain frameworks in place, but committed to capturing large amounts of information in (what he repeatedly claims to be) relatively little time. With respect to Vaughan's desire to differentiate his journal-writing from 'conscious writing', this study considers the conscious element in his journal-writing to be his use of literary devices and effects and his reflections on the writing process itself.

The first journal entry of the third volume proceeds for eight pages to detail Vaughan's sexual history from his earliest recollections of childhood. The fact that Vaughan chooses sexual development as the first subject to address following the declaration of his autobiographical aims foregrounds the importance of candour on sexual matters as a fundamental tenet of the brutal honesty to which he aspired. He certainly valued candour when reading life-writing by others, for a month later he would take issue with what he perceived to be a campaign of concealment by Edward Carpenter in his 1916 book *My Days and Dreams*: 'I object chiefly to his refusal to admit his homosexuality [...] This seems to me from all standards inexcusable in an autobiography.' (04.05.40; J3, p.88) While Carpenter harboured, according to Rudi Bleys, 'messianic expectations regarding the active political role to be played by homosexual men and women in order to change society'<sup>1</sup>, Vaughan evidently perceived, however mistakenly, Carpenter to be an ineffectual figurehead due to an apparent evasiveness regarding his own sexuality. Meanwhile, Vaughan's reference to loosening 'the obsession' with sex through writing suggests a corrective role for the journal: that of purging unresolved fixations through full disclosure. In this respect Vaughan seems to have been, whether intentionally or otherwise, subscribing to the medicalized account of the homosexual male as a type that required careful cross-examination. Foucault asserts that, thanks to the institutional apparatus erected in order to study the body and sexual pleasures and preferences, the male homosexual came into being as a type, one identified as 'a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood [...] a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy

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<sup>1</sup> Rudi Bleys, *The Geography of Perversion: Male-to-male Sexual Behaviour outside the West and the Ethnographic Imagination 1750–1918* (London: Cassell, 1996), p.243



and a mysterious physiology'.<sup>2</sup> This does nothing to undermine this study's conceptualization of Vaughan as an outsider, as his search for types was largely constrained to literature and pseudo-medical works in the absence of real-world examples. Vaughan begins his sexual history, 'My earliest recollection of sex other than auto-eroticism was at the age of 5 or 6', and proceeds to explain a game called 'dogs', played when staying at his cousin's home in the country, that consisted solely of crawling on all fours with 'the penis exposed' (p.8). Vaughan bestows upon his younger self a somewhat premature sensitivity to social conduct, remarking that he only participated 'from the need of being congenial'. He then describes how, at a similar age, he asked to see his female cousin's genitals, but how this arose simply because he had gathered 'from example' that 'such a request would be the sort of thing expected of me'. Here he dismisses a behaviour conventional to heterosexual development, described by Freud as 'the instinct for knowledge or research'<sup>3</sup>, as arising only from social necessity and not genuine curiosity. The next episode that he presents as significant is the first instance in which he experienced what he could retrospectively consider an attraction; Vaughan recalls his fascination with an orphaned boy who stayed with his family and who he was informed was 'a habitual masturbate [sic]' (p.9). Vaughan's decision to include such an episode supports Weeks' argument as to the importance placed on childhood in accounts of homosexual identity formation: 'There is abundant evidence that individual, self-defined homosexuals see their sexuality as deeply rooted, and often manifest at a very early age.'<sup>4</sup> Although Vaughan clarifies that his 'first consciously sexual emotion' occurred around the age of fourteen (p.10), this earlier episode involving the orphaned boy serves to suggest the latency of sexual drives that would persist throughout his life – chiefly his desire for the male body and his lifelong curiosity regarding masturbation.

It is most significant that the sexual history with which Vaughan has chosen to preface his attempt to initiate an autobiography takes care to present the pattern of his romantic and sexual attachments as established from early in his youth; already his engagement with the past gestures towards a destiny to be different. Vaughan first ensures that he distinguishes his attraction to other boys from the

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<sup>2</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, 1: an Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), p.43

<sup>3</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality' (1905), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol.7 (London: the Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1953), pp.135-243; p.194

<sup>4</sup> Weeks, 'Discourse, Desire and Sexual Deviance: Some Problems in a History of Homosexuality', p.108. Weeks does proceed to clarify that this undermining of a 'purely voluntarist position' is itself called into question by 'all the evidence of historical variations'.

sexual development of his peers. He describes being perturbed during his schooldays by the gang of smutty boys who used to dwell on 'the biological process of propagation', and recalls regarding their crass gossiping with the same bored detachment with which he fulfilled his exchange of knowledge with his female cousin (pp.9-10). He suggests that longing and infatuation preceded and steadily fed his bodily awareness, describing his own 'passionate unrequited longings for boys of various ages, sexuality gradually becoming more prominent as I developed' (pp.10-1). He claims that these longings 'sowed the seeds of self consciousness, shyness', and that they prepared him 'for the fact that love was so often to "feed on my damask flesh"', working in an uncredited reference to *Twelfth Night*<sup>5</sup> as a flourish of erudition to set him apart rhetorically as well as developmentally (p.11). From here he recounts 'with triumph and gratitude' his first love affair once he had left school, an affair with a 'J.W.' whose full name was John Wood and who was Vaughan's first regular photographic model<sup>6</sup>: 'I had loved him distantly for a year or more at school, the last and most passionate of my schoolday loves.' He writes of how 'J.W.' came to stay at their London flat, of the boy's previous experience of 'passive physical relations with a homosexual master at school', and of how their own coy relations developed (pp.12-4). The culmination of this account is a passage that sets the template for every account of a relationship to come:

We loved with all our hearts and souls and with a singleness and innocence and intensity that only green youth knows. But the battle was lost from the start [...] Memory keeps in me every detail of his body and every rapture and delight of our love. From then on, for years, my search for love has always been to recapture in quality this first love. I have set out always with this preconceived ideal of physical and psychic harmony effortlessly coming together. The friend and lover. Nothing else would do. (p.14)

He admits that this set him up for 'failure', emphasizing an impossibility of odds and therefore the inevitability of disillusionment. His use of foreshadowing is a consciously literary device intended to establish a context for the autobiographical writings to come. This first entry in volume three of the journal ends: 'With J.W. I ~~found the achievement of the impossible~~ tasted the triumph of success. Too soon perhaps, for my palate was then green.' (p.15) In this sexual history, provided after his declaration of the aims of his autobiographical project, Vaughan sought to demonstrate the honesty, specifically on sexual matters, that he deemed so

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<sup>5</sup> William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, ed. Keir Elam (London: Cengage Learning, 'Arden Shakespeare', 2008), p.235. Vaughan is paraphrasing the line: "Feed on her damask cheek" (II.IV.112).

<sup>6</sup> Gerard Hastings, *Keith Vaughan: the Photographs* (London: Pagham Press, 2013), pp.21-4

important to all life-writing. When Vaughan writes, 'Memory keeps in me every detail', he reinforces the authority of his own powers of recall and supports such claims to honesty, yet he also reveals a purpose for the recording of certain (invariably romantic) episodes: a need to capture memories.

When consulting the second volume of the journal we find early indications of Vaughan's drive to write an autobiography. The second volume contains several early examples of the detailed, contained autobiographical episodes that appear with increased regularity and purpose in the third volume. These episodes are narratives relating Vaughan's pre-war past and are largely characterized by their attention to descriptive detail, often resulting in a considerable word count, and differentiation from other entries via such formatting devices as headings. It is necessary to chart the evolution of such autobiographical episodes from the second volume to the third if their significance to Vaughan is to be understood. The first example is Vaughan's account of an attempted seduction whilst on a trip to Chamonix in South-East France. The eight-page journal entry dated 31<sup>st</sup> January 1940 is devoted entirely to this account and its underlined heading 'Chamonix' predicts the format of future autobiographical episodes in the third volume and beyond. The entry begins with a relatively minimal introduction as Vaughan describes his engagement with a book bringing back the memory of his trip: 'a precious Faber publication, nicer to the touch and eye than the intellect, reminds me of the day I went to Chamonix.' (J2, p.49) The early emphasis on the primacy of the sensual can be considered the introduction of a theme to be explored in this episode, especially as its structure becomes apparent as resembling a short, thematically anchored piece of prose fiction. Vaughan describes travelling alone by coach as an experience of '[p]leasant, passive indulgence' but introduces suspense to his narrative by referencing his mood having been 'excited, fearful, and sad'. Once he describes his awkwardness upon arriving at his hotel and his desire to sleep with one of the boys working there, he shifts the scene to his hotel room and his urge to call up the aforementioned boy, building suspense with clipped syntax: 'I pressed the bell and waited. The door opened. It might be the manager or one of the maids. It was he.' (p.52) Vaughan relates the words between them, his declaration to the boy that he wishes to sleep with him, as dialogue in French, and in doing so achieves the intended effect of dramatic immediacy. Ultimately the seductive attempt is unsuccessful as Vaughan 'hadn't courage' to see it through, the opportunity gone as he 'only slept there one night' (p.54). He implies an explanation of the boy's reticence by projecting frigidity onto the surrounding landscape, describing the town as 'cold in the evenings' and somewhat 'unfriendly' (p.55). The episode, and the entry, concludes with Vaughan

confirming that he approached the boy purely out of opportunism and fear of regretting not doing so (p.56). While the final passage evidences some inclination towards evaluating his motivations, this episode is primarily concerned, like a short story, with the development of a scene (the stranger attempting a seduction) and a theme (the opportunistic pursuit of a purely sensual experience) culminating in a downbeat and reflective denouement. It can be considered simply as an exercise in the plundering of one's past for material that can be crafted by literary means into a self-contained narrative.

The latter part of the entry dated 8<sup>th</sup> March 1940 consists of another, shorter episode introduced offhandedly with the phrase, 'a propos of looking back' (J2, p.117). As with the 'Chamonix' episode, the occasion of remembrance and its being written arise purely for their own sake, with Vaughan's memories of a sexual encounter allegedly prompted thus: 'The boy in the cinema last night, sitting in front of me reminded me of Bobby Burns.' Vaughan details his attraction to Bobby, citing his 'serene and classical beauty' and the grey flannels and sports jacket in which 'his body was painfully attractive' (pp.117-8). Once 'the need for him was urgent', Vaughan initiated 'the routine experiment': the familiar process of driving a love interest from Kensington High Street station to Corfe in Dorset and staying in 'the same room the same bed as Jack' (pp.118-9). He makes an attempt on Bobby but concedes that 'defeat was easy and inevitable' (p.119). He concludes the entry: 'That was the second of the Dorset journeys. Jack was first and Stan came later.' (p.120) There is evidence in these closing remarks of an early attempt by Vaughan to order his experiences; this, reinforced by references to a previously employed method (or 'routine') of seduction, makes this an episode that is at once self-contained and yet situated in a wider context of Vaughan's romantic history.

The first autobiographical episode that truly begins to address the workings and motivations of memory, therefore acting as an important precursor to those found in the third volume of the journal, comes merely days after in the entry dated 11<sup>th</sup> March 1940. Running to over forty pages, the episode that constitutes this entire entry contains an exhaustive amount of detail. Beneath the underlined heading 'Stan's Story', Vaughan begins: 'I was writing of Dorset and the weekend journeys I made there. Hopeless attempts to recapture the joy I once found ~~there~~.' (p.125) Immediately Vaughan is reflecting on the inadequacies of recollection and he proceeds to cast doubt ('I do not think I had it consciously in mind as a destination') on whether he had taken Stan to Corfe with seductive intent. He clouds his account with ambiguities of detail ('It was 1933 or 4 in the June heatwave') and establishes a

romanticized tone that serves to mystify the specifics of the story, describing the 'fairy tale castle' at Corfe and conceding that 'perhaps unconsciously I felt it would be sympathetic to my amorous quest'. Most crucially, his introduction to this episode includes the declaration: 'The story of Stan is complex and bitter and partly a triumph.' Over the pages that follow he relates his first meeting with Stan while taking photographs at the Highgate bathing enclosure, their walk and conversations until the early hours, and him taking Stan to Pagham where Stan would meet Harold, a friend whose later claim to Stan's affections would result in an acrimonious falling-out with Vaughan. The tale as Vaughan relates it, at considerable length, employs many conventions of romantic fiction in order to generate intrigue and suspense: a winsome account of the passing of time ('Pagham grew up around them. I went only a visitor'; p.131); Vaughan's initial role as 'mediator' and confidante in a breakdown of relations between Stan and Harold (p.133); and a complex plot involving a slow, patient winning of Stan's affections (pp.136-8) and an act of treachery enclosed in a spiteful letter (pp.150-3). All the while Vaughan claims to be unsure of his own mindset ('It is difficult now to recapture states of mind that are long forgotten'; p.136) and motivations ('I do not know whether subconsciously I realized this would further my own ends as well'; p.138). The development of Vaughan's storytelling skills in this episode serves a particular agenda, for the overwrought nature and momentum of the romantic plot as Vaughan relates it and his own difficulties in recollecting specifics of mindset and motivation serve to diminish his agency and therefore his culpability in the acrimony that follows. Here, autobiography offers an opportunity for the defence of one's character. Although Vaughan enjoys a romantic relationship with Stan, its eventual dissolution is declared to be inevitable due to the momentum of the romantic plot; the 'violent emotional transition' Vaughan experiences is presented as fated (p.148), and in the concluding passage we are reminded that 'every fact of our life was against it' (p.168). The lessons that he implies should be learned from this episode help to situate it in Vaughan's romantic history. This episode's purpose as a case study of ill-fated romantic entanglement is apparent from Vaughan's final verdict on Stan's character, which is effectively a diagnosis of him as having an underdeveloped sense of self (p.163). In the closing passage, however, we find a clue in Vaughan's acknowledgement of a 'brief and transitory perfection' to the affair (p.168) which leads us back to perhaps the greatest discovery of this autobiographical episode: the sanctity of a perfect memory that can detach itself from all outside circumstances. He writes of their sexual union:

But the memory of that moment when his body melted completely without reserve into mine is unforgettable [...] I can remember that I was in bottomless, endless peace [...] It was an episode I like to feel detached from the course of life. A walled garden of the memory. (pp.145-6)

After the account of their slipping apart following revelations from Harold, Vaughan nevertheless describes his brief period of happiness with Stan as being 'complete and self contained' (p.165). It is that sense of completion and containment that Vaughan achieves in this extensive episode and that he carries forward into the autobiographical project of the journal's third volume.

The declaration of autobiographical aims with which Vaughan begins the third volume is soon supported by an entry dated 'April 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>' [1940] that contains three major autobiographical episodes, all of which have headings in ink that evidence their contemporaneity with the main body of text. Following an initial five pages that addresses such political themes as the possible breaking-up of the British Empire and different models of revolution, Vaughan introduces the first of the upcoming episodes by writing, 'I have thought a lot about Hugh lately so I will write that ~~brief~~ chapter from my life' (J3, p.27). This impetus seems informed by both the previously stated aim of spontaneous honesty, and the attempt to engage with the questions of why certain memories arise or persist unexpectedly. Directly below this statement Vaughan has written the heading 'autobiographical' and underlined it<sup>7</sup>, the very first of many instances throughout his journal in which he intended to differentiate material with defined autobiographical parameters (often relating to a named subject or period of time) from other surrounding material. Due to the clear line break from the passage above, this first heading seems to have been written in sequence with the main body of the text, whereas the headings for the two subsequent episodes – respectively added to the top left corner of p.43 and squeezed between two lines of text on p.50 – appear to have been accommodated soon after<sup>8</sup>. The entry ends with what can be considered a brief fourth episode on its final four pages, seemingly differentiated from the preceding material by the drawing of a border around the first word of a new paragraph: the surname of its subject (p.55).<sup>9</sup> The care with which Vaughan has formatted this journal entry evidences a new, concerted commitment to organizing the episodes of his pre-war past.

<sup>7</sup> In each of the three instances that 'autobiographical' is used as a heading in this entry, Vaughan has used a large lower-case 'a' as opposed to a capital letter.

<sup>8</sup> The ink and handwriting evidence their contemporaneity with the main body of the text.

<sup>9</sup> At some point soon after, Vaughan had deleted this surname with black marker pen, leaving only the first letter 'F'; in different ink and later handwriting (likely 1970s) the full name, 'FARRANT' (Vaughan's caps), has been restored.

In terms of content, the three autobiographical episodes that constitute the bulk of the entry dated 'April 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>' all reflect on the nature of specific memories. The first episode begins with some early scene-setting, 'the sun low and warm and the air still after a day which belonged properly to summer' (p.27). Vaughan recalls a vantage point on the shore from which he regarded with interest the silhouette of a boy on an approaching boat<sup>10</sup>, proudly commenting, 'Little did I realize that before the end of the night all his secrets would be known to me' (p.28). He remarks on the strangeness of their chance liaison, proceeding as it did 'as though to a deliberate preconceived plan'. He elaborates that all romantic eventualities had 'already been visualized at the first moment of meeting' and therefore could not completely surprise him, yet concedes that he is so used to them remaining unrealized that their fruition is made 'difficult to grasp and accept as actual' (p.29). The degree to which idealization during and since this experience has hampered his ability to memorize the boy is apparent in the closing lines of this episode: 'I would like too to have the complete picture of his nakedness to round off my memory of him [...] He had all the irritating habits of a child. But his memory is very lovable.' (p.42) The second episode, headed 'autobiographical – France – Cassis', is introduced by Vaughan as a case study, beginning:

I have always been incapable of indulging in sex cold bloodedly and exclusive [...] For a short period I tried indulging in neat sexuality. The idea of it is attractive and the memory of it attractive but the moment, because of its psychological tension was always unsatisfying.

What follows is the account of one such instance in which he tried to indulge in this way. The third episode, headed 'autobiographical. Hyde Park', begins: 'One other, I think the second occasion was quite brief and sordid though attractive in retrospect, God knows why.' (p.50) Both the second and third episodes, in their engagements with acts that are only 'attractive' in theory and (particularly) in retrospect, create a logical sequence from the first episode in this journal entry by considering how the retrospective memory (which we should consider 'knowledge') of a romantic or sexual liaison is more powerful than the moment of interaction itself. The fourth episode, involving a different youth who Vaughan used as a photographic model, is addressed as 'a similar story' (p.55) and therefore acts as somewhat of an appendix to this sequence of episodes. The autobiographical episodes in this journal entry achieve a continuation of the objectives evident in 'Stan's Story': the situation of romantically themed episodes within Vaughan's romantic and sexual history; and

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<sup>10</sup> The location, 'Red Warf [*sic*] Bay', has been added to the right of the existing heading ('autobiographical'), some years after judging from the difference in ink and later handwriting.

the engagement with the importance of memories that have achieved an unexpected prominence or clarity.

An important feature of the third volume is the use of headings to differentiate entries of quotidian record from his 'autobiographical' episodes; entries of the former nature are headed 'Diary' on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 26<sup>th</sup> April, and 3<sup>rd</sup> May [1940]. The 'Diary' heading itself may have been short-lived, but its few instances of use nevertheless evidence the increased care Vaughan was taking from the third volume onwards to distinguish differing materials, and therefore memories, from one another. The image of the 'walled garden' that appeared in the previous volume in 'Stan's Story' proves useful in appreciating Vaughan's desire to seal off and protect particular memories. Sometimes those memories were simply of potent images that demanded preservation, as with the case of a young man in a garden near the town of Littleton who piqued Vaughan's interest. In an entry headed 'Diary' and dated 26<sup>th</sup> April, Vaughan first records his sighting of 'a youth in the garden' of a cottage, a chance occurrence as he inspects rustic homesteads and the surrounding area for a subject to paint (p.71). They size one another up, with the youth eventually catching up by bike and briefly striking up small talk with Vaughan as he takes the path away from the scene (pp.72-3). Regretting his reticence to fully engage the youth, Vaughan laments, 'I know I shall go back there. I know I shall haunt and loiter the corner by his garden' (p.75). Sure enough, in an entry just over a week later, Vaughan recounts revisiting the scene near Littleton and attempts to assess his motivations for doing so: 'Perhaps to distill [*sic*] something of the picture in the ~~air~~ earth to a form more real and tangible that I could grasp and hold' (04.05.40; J3, p.80). As he approaches the cottage Vaughan sees him again in the garden and feels his 'longing' return for this 'single unknown individual' whose fair hair and labourer's clothes mark him as one 'grown in the simple earthiness of a world of which I could but touch the surface of its closed and private shell'. Assumptions about the boy's class create the invisible barriers of his world and therefore the barriers to further intimacy. Despite the notable prevalence of walled gardens in Vaughan's wartime pictures (particularly those at Ashton Gifford), the writing of such powerfully imagistic memories, their enclosure in words, seems to have been necessary on the evidence of these two lengthy, descriptive entries. The comfort Vaughan derived from the enclosure of memories is evident in a later entry in which several pages on his unhappiness with his present circumstances gives way to an account of his final school days: '8 years concrete misery and romantic reveries [...] I closed my schooldays in a kind of phantasmagoria of tangled visions and unbalanced emotion' (31.07.14; J3, p.233). The double meaning of 'closing' here



allows for an interpretation whereby his final days, as an antidote to the 'misery' that preceded them, are enclosed in a comforting myth through an imaginative process that created more fantastical memories. The implication here, in the context of how this entry is sequenced, is that memory can transform his present malaise into something better. The act of remembering in conjunction with the practice of journal-writing is increasingly understood as a creative process.

The restorative potential of revisiting the memories of his schooldays points to another function of Vaughan's desire to remember and record: the seeking of comfort or consolation. In a journal entry recounting his mother's birthday and her hopes that Vaughan will produce children, Vaughan begins a section headed 'Autobiographical' in which he retreats from present pressures to reflect on the peace of Sunday evenings at school. He writes that they 'remain very clearly detached in my memory', carrying with them 'a distinctive flavour and satisfaction particularly in the quality of that hour from 4.30 to tea time' (24.06.40; J3, p.167). In the next entry, headed 'Autobiographical' next to its date, Vaughan again begins with an admission of his present troubles, lamenting: 'Looking back over my ~~hardly~~ life I am quite astonished that it should be possible for a person to have had so little physical experience or contact with life' (26.06.40; J3, p.170). Having proceeded to write on his inhibitions, the difference between mental and physical experience, and how the war may have provided circumstances for him to develop, he begins a new page with 'I was in Berlin' and describes a dream in which he was accompanied to the German capital first by his mother, and then by his recently deceased brother (p.174). He writes of his difficulty in recording the dream: 'The incidents remain in my memory as a series of emotional flavours. The particular flavour that each incident carried with it. I have to construct the details as nearly as possible from the recollection of the emotion.' (p.177) Vaughan describes waking from this vivid dream and quips, 'I am still not altogether satisfied that I have not been to Germany' (p.181), suggesting a consolation to his previously stated problem of lack of experience in the realization that memories, even those of a dream, can constitute a powerful reality. Thus their transcription proves to be a creative process with a positive cathartic effect.

In the third volume we find evidence not only of the comforting effects achieved when enclosing memories in journal entries, but also those achieved when framing memories that are not comforting but raw and painful. The entry dated 16<sup>th</sup> May 1940 contains the message concerning his brother Dick's disappearance, yet Vaughan has chosen to begin the entry with a very dramatic, poetically styled build-

up to the revelation of the message, employing elaborate imagery and snatches of free indirect speech:

Today or some other day this still water will be broken and black shaddows [*sic*] reaching out from the cedar trees. The black ebony arches of the cedar trees.

The bridges.

But I'm very sorry to hear it indeed Vaughan.

This level celestial moonlight will be broken for a moment into a million splinter [*sic*] of agony and screaming and the still water will close together again after drowning the cries and reinstating a stratospheric calm. What is ~~what~~ one day or one year of grief in the million light years through which the sun disintegrates its energy.

Regret to inform you – reported missing – in action

I could hear mother[']s cries as I came up the stairs [...] (J3, p.105)

In this passage Vaughan reflects and recreates the reality in which the terrible news is only gradually filtering in. The speech that bears the news and attempts condolence is situated within a wider context of human suffering, which can be understood as Vaughan's effort to make sense of death by contextualizing the scale of personal tragedy. Rather than being an instance in which memories are embedded and enclosed to alleviate the anxieties of the present, this entry demonstrates Vaughan's use of literary effects in the moment of writing to address and make sense of the pain of a memory.

The journal entry that contains the final autobiographical episode of the third volume acts in many ways as a conclusion or crescendo, with the final three entries that follow acting as a kind of coda or winding down of the volume. This twenty-page episode, appearing in a thirty-four-page entry, exhibits and develops in confident fashion those features that characterized earlier episodes. Ten pages into the entry dated 3<sup>rd</sup> August, after a line break and the heading 'Autobiographical', Vaughan begins with an explanation of the account that follows:

I will tell you the story of Robert. Not that it is exceptional, but I shall enjoy telling it in detail and it affords an example of the oddly unreasoning trust that I put on hair breadth chance sometimes, and which sometimes justifies itself. (J3, p.248)

The authorial voice is more authoritative than ever, addressing 'you' and therefore suggesting sufficient confidence in his autobiographical abilities that he is prepared to be read.<sup>11</sup> These opening lines also posit the episode as a particular case study in Vaughan's romantic history and therefore something to be learned from. He begins

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<sup>11</sup> Even if the intended reader is only Vaughan in the future. Until the third volume of the journal there had not been any discernible conceptualization of an intended or future reader – whether that be Vaughan, or another, or a reading public – other than the censorious eyes of the authorities.

a new paragraph by setting the scene of the account that follows: 'It was late summer. Two years ago I suppose. In 1938.' As in previous episodes, he examines the strength of his feelings for the man in question ('Is it possible to love a person in such a brief time. I felt I loved him'; p.262) before progressing to reflect on the significance of the most powerful memory of all: 'I think that night was the most perfect consummation of love I have known.' (p.264) He writes of their 'smooth & perfect harmony of rapture', emphasizing the clarity of the moment. In the manner of previous episodes he stresses how their relationship could not stretch too far beyond that one moment and how prepared he was for this (pp.264-5), a cathartic strategy helping him come to terms with the finite nature of romantic attachments. Having 'accepted that it couldn't be', he recalls that they met again 'once, maybe twice, I forget' as if to emphasize how even such ordinarily crucial details could have been overpowered by the primacy of that one perfect memory (p.265).

Most importantly this final autobiographical episode of the third volume concludes, after a line break, with a reflective tract addressing 'you', the reader, and testifying to Vaughan's truthfulness, his refusal to censor, and his indifference to seeking anyone's approval. He begins: 'Why have I written of these things which most men think unmentionable? Why have I told you the secrets of my life which no other man has told you?' (p.268) In this alarming and unprecedented address to the 'you' of a future reader Vaughan argues that he is not necessarily 'proud' of or wishing to 'exaggerate' the events he relays, but is merely setting them down 'simply and accurately and truthfully as I remember them'. He claims to have no concern for 'the moral values of the things I have done', hoping only that 'you may see how one man met his trials and disasters' (pp.268-9). Over the subsequent three pages he defends his writing on sex and its suitability as a subject for autobiography. He denies any attempt through literary artifice to 'create for you, in the solitude of your room the echo of the pleasures and sensations' he experienced (p.270), and, interestingly, offers no clear answers to the question posed in the opening lines of this passage: 'Perhaps it is to satisfy an exhibitionist complex that I tell you things [...] I will leave that question to the psychologists.' (p.271) This level of playful ambiguity stops short of professing a motivation or an agenda for his re-telling, thus bolstering his claims to honesty. As if to emphasize the honesty implicit in spontaneity, Vaughan ends this entry by stressing that all thirty-four pages dated 3<sup>rd</sup> August have been written in just one session 'during the whole of a long summer day' (p.272).

The reflective tract that follows the story of Robert addresses all of the resolutions made in Vaughan's declaration of his autobiographical project in the first entry of the third volume. These resolutions exerted a pressure under which Vaughan struggled throughout the third volume, his increased attention paid to the practice of journal-writing resulting in bouts of self-awareness and anxiety. He confesses that, 'Really to write about myself or even know myself is the hardest task I have known.' (13.05.40; J3, p.103) Elsewhere he questions why he should 'go on' writing, answering: 'Because I want to know what I am, what I want, what I can do, what is real, what is lovely.' (15.06.40; J3, p.136) This proliferation of reasons to write, which seems to escalate in its ambition to define such intangibles as reality or loveliness, secures the future of the journal as a continued practice with indefinite aims. In a new paragraph he then declares that he wants to 'tear out this page' and break his nails on the table and bang his head against the wall as he 'cannot possible [sic] keep up' with his thoughts as he writes, an overwhelming task he likens to 'trying to name the stars in a rocket as it cuts through the sky.' (pp.136-7) This is not the first occasion on which Vaughan has struggled with 'words that detach themselves from subconscious thought as soon as they are thought' (01.06.40; J3, p.120). After this entry's reference to journal-writing as 'self imposed labour', he wonders whether what keeps it going is simply his 'desire to impose direction and finality'. The word 'direction' is key here, for it often arises when Vaughan seemed to expect too much from his journal-writing. He laments that, 'Like the opposite poles of a magnet I pull myself in opposite directions, reducing myself to inaction and dumbness' (pp.120-1). Yet the practice of journal-writing, despite his doubts, surely combats both 'inaction' and 'dumbness' in itself. The following entry begins, 'Sometimes I have the feeling that I have got by mischance into the wrong train, doing [sic] the wrong direction with the wrong people' (06.06.40; J3, p.122), yet throughout the course of this entry he addresses his need for society, the contrasting need for a great man ('always alone') to 'cut out his own trail', and such issues as his conscientious objection and the situation in Spain; here the very act of journal-writing aids him in navigating the hypothetical routes he might take while his opening complaint seems a veiled recognition that writing can achieve this. Writing a later entry whilst 'floundering' as to whether he should withdraw his case for conscientious objection, Vaughan realizes that as he 'formulated the thoughts into words' his doubts dissolved and he decided to remain steadfast (09.08.40; J3, p.286).

Vaughan voices his frustrations with what he perceives to be the shortcomings of his journal-writing, yet he often overcomes them by returning to his

previously stated commitment to honesty and spontaneity. In a later entry he admits in a parenthetical note: 'Rereading the earlier autobiographical sections in this journals fills me [with] an acute disgust and sense of shame.' (09.07.40; J3, p.213) He reasons that his deficiencies in 'technique' must be to blame here, as he cannot be convinced as to the unsuitability of sex as a subject. Nevertheless, he resolves that 'it can't be helped', declaring that he 'will not select from the truth' or gloss over events that are 'ineradicably part of my history, however unpleasant or shaming their memory may be'. Despite anxieties surrounding his technique, Vaughan proves quick to quash any overly conscious attempts at literary artifice; beneath a vivid description of how the sunset evokes images of human viscera, he swiftly reprimands himself: 'This is intended for a journal, not a contribution to the treasures of literature.' (05.08.40; J3, p.273) True to a volume that began with the heading 'subconscious monologue', Vaughan repeatedly returns to the practice of spontaneity. 'I wish I could distill [sic] the prose of this journal', he writes, 'But if I think to [sic] long over a sentence I loose [sic] the thread of sequence, and even the sentence itself becomes artificial and loses its original meaning.' (03.08.40; J3, p.246) He reasons that the 'only way' is 'to write spontaneously, pausing as little as possible to search for a word or to turn a phrase' with the option to revise later at leisure ('Then I can see how far the revision supercedes [sic] or falls short of the original'). On the very last page of text in the third volume, Vaughan offers the following reflections:

There is something final about writing the last page in a book [...] There are many words in it [...] These words were written mostly in agony, sometimes with enjoyment, sometimes in lust. I want to tear out the pornographic pages, but I won't, because they are part of me. (09.08.40; p.287)

Below this final passage Vaughan writes a word count of 48,000 which he has calculated by scribbling numbers on the inside back page. This attempt at summary provides the final evidence that the third volume marked the point at which Vaughan's journal became a seriously undertaken autobiographical project.

Vaughan carries this seriousness of approach through to the fourth volume. On the very first page, prior to any dated entries, he writes an introduction without a date or heading in which he addresses the challenge faced by the journal-writer when beginning a new volume:

The first white page of a new book is something like the first day of a new year; one approaches it with the same resolution [...] as though time and an accident of the binders could break the continuity of thought and living and lift the unyielding shackles of the past.

The image of ‘shackles’ lends a grandeur and weight to his ongoing task, while the suggestion of the simultaneous ridiculousness and inevitability of the threshold that a new page presents evidences his newfound, committed engagement with the processes and problems of journal-writing. Despite the acknowledgement of the psychic threshold to be crossed in starting a new book, the fourth volume demonstrates ‘continuity of thought’ in employing many of the formats and features developed in the course of the preceding volume. Vaughan continued to experiment, writing a short paragraph on his view from the window and his sunlit musings on ‘all the mornings of the world’ above the entry dated 19<sup>th</sup> August 1940. He writes in parentheses beneath this paragraph ‘St Johns. 9am. a preface’, dabbling with a new term of categorization with which to differentiate his forms of writing (J4, p.62).

The prime example of the continuity between the third and fourth volume is the belated reflection by Vaughan on the death of his brother, Dick. Vaughan devotes a twenty-four-page entry in the fourth volume to finally confronting his loss; to do so he employs conventions developed throughout the autobiographical episodes of the third volume. It is appropriate for Vaughan to do so here, for although previous episodes involved romantic attachments his brother was nevertheless one whom he loved and who is now lost to him, the memory of him, therefore, in need of preservation. He structures the entry by first describing the trigger for his remembrance of the individual in question, in this case visiting a pub he had frequented with his brother and his recollection of a joke that Dick had made (15.08.40; J4, p.39). He describes the effect as follows:

When I thought of that ~~the memory~~ I had a sudden memory of Dick alive and it came slap up against the knowledge that he is dead and for a moment I ~~unde~~ felt what it means that he is dead; that we shan’t be able to make those silly jokes together anymore. (pp.39-40)

The corrections made during the writing of this passage reveal Vaughan’s efforts to clarify the nature and power of this recollection. Atop the next page he explains, as in previous autobiographical episodes, his motivation for an extensive written account of their relations: ‘Writing about this has set me thinking of Dick and for the first time it begins to hurt.’ (p.41) Having elaborated on the abstract nature of his grief up until that point, he declares, ‘I want to remember all I can about Dick.’ His mandate for honesty results in unprecedented detail on a hitherto unaddressed aspect of his youth: ‘As we grew up we changed not only in relation to life but in relation to each other. There was never quite the hardened accepted relationship of brothers.’ (p.42) He writes candidly on subjects ranging from their shared interests in books and music (pp.49-50) to more sensitive issues, such as Vaughan’s ‘treading

the edge of a crater' when briefly struck by his brother's adolescent beauty (p.52) and his talking Dick out of hastily marrying before leaving on RAF duty and the possibility he died a virgin (pp.56-7). Most pointedly, Vaughan expresses his regret that the climate of wartime had fostered an improved understanding between them in their postal correspondence (pp.42-3), especially as they 'could say in letters things that it had been impossible to say in words' (p.53), even as war ultimately provided the circumstances of this tragedy.

Vaughan employs the conventions of previous autobiographical episodes in his eulogy for Dick in order to achieve a cathartic and consoling effect in the present. The two most significant conventions employed here are the focus on a mythical perfect memory, and the situation of his loss in a wider context of human tragedy. The former is a comforting myth of his custody of Dick as a child. Vaughan recalls his brother's nervousness and fear of loud noises, particularly at the cinema with any film that may have 'bangs' in it (pp.44-6). The moment of triumph came when Dick finally managed to sit through an entire film, *The Covered Wagon* (1923), despite its action consisting of 'a succession of crises' (pp.46-7). Vaughan recalls it as if it were a legend of the two brothers: 'victory was as bright as a row of medals. We stepped out in the sunshine, rich with triumph to bear home the news of our success' (p.47). He calls it their 'first successful campaign together' (p.48), although he suggests that Dick's insistence on re-watching the film inevitably led to diminishing returns in his own satisfaction (as in his romantic episodes previously). This memory as Vaughan writes it encapsulates his belief in fleeting moments of clarity between people. He consoles himself as to the fleeting nature of their relationship, and Dick's tragically short life, by shaping a narrative in which the end of their family line was inevitable: 'I do not think it a very grate [*sic*] tragedy that we finish with my death. We have been neither illustrious nor happy.' (p.58) He alarmingly casts aspersions on Dick's character and place in the world (again, as he had done to others in previous episodes) by claiming his brother's inheritance of 'the weaknesses of my father' (p.59). He describes their last ever moments together: 'We dissolved our ^20 years^ partnership at the St. Martins entrance to Trafalgar Square tube station [...] each knew that it was unlikely we should meet again.' Vaughan retrospectively paints in the black cloud of fate, with his addition that '[t]he following day news came of the German invasion of Holland and Belgium' implying that the wider tragedy across Europe made such bereavements inevitable for millions. For a journal entry that started with a moment of recollection in a pub, Vaughan draws his focus back to address the macrocosmic by ending with a consideration of the nature of happiness in a world full of suffering (pp.60-1). His

account of his relationship with his brother, as tough as it is tender, best illustrates the influence of the third volume in the use and development of conventions that helped Vaughan to process and preserve memories through writing.

Vaughan continued in the fourth volume and beyond to evaluate his practice of journal-writing. On the first anniversary of the journal's commencement he begins a new entry:

I have reread some of the entries I wrote in this Journal a year ago. Beneath the flouncing encumbrance [*sic*] of adjectives I can trace the thin line of my feeling at the time, and remember more or less clearly what I wanted to say. (25.08.40; J3, p.83)

While he is critical of what he perceives to be an affected style of writing, a 'preposterous and unwieldy muddle of words' of which he seems embarrassed, Vaughan begrudgingly acknowledges here that his project has achieved some success. He re-states his purpose of 'writing a document of a human life', declaring his wish for words 'to express what I feel and say, not to exist separately as themselves.' He professes his failure thus far as a skilled practitioner of 'spontaneous writing' – due, he claims, to being untrained and underestimating the need for technique – and evidences his continued belief in this practice as a means to ensure honesty of expression. Only weeks after, having been advised by Guildford Police and local magistrates to remove incriminating material from his journal, Vaughan writes of resisting the pressure to self-censor, declaring of the entries in question: 'The reason why I have written them has already been disclosed + the reason is still as good as it ever was.' (04.10.40; J4, p.85) He admits that rereading has been 'embarrassing', but rules that his present 'attitude of mind', his urge to comply, must not be deemed of greater importance than the preservation of the past (p.86). Reading Vaughan's evaluations of his writing and his resolutions to resist censorship (both by himself and others) we understand the influence of the third volume in establishing the tenets of his autobiographical project. We also understand Vaughan's commitment to the practice of journal-writing as a creative process in need of continued critical evaluation.

## **ii. A Literary Education**

Vaughan was often effusive on the benefits of reading other life-writers: 'Whenever I read the doings and aspirations and struggles of another's life I am urged to do



something about myself. Find something, somewhere, some way of living which has form and shape and solidity in which I can create myself.' (31.07.40; J3, p.226) Here he writes of their galvanizing effect, their works' suggestion of inner restlessness translated into literary production. Despite Vaughan's use of such strikingly visual terms as 'form and shape and solidity', he was at this point in his life unsure as to how he could translate his own restlessness into art, doubting 'the extent' of his 'talents' and the 'specific direction in which they would be realised'. Over the following two years, he immersed himself in reading texts by other life-writers whilst expanding into modern (and modernist) poetry and prose. Vaughan was already a keen reader before the commencement of his journal but the wartime barracks proved to be his university. Having sharpened his critical faculties through an increased awareness of the processes and problems of his own autobiographical writing, Vaughan was quickly able to absorb the influences of his wartime reading and in doing so develop new creative possibilities in his journal-writing.

The earliest major influence discussed in Vaughan's journal is Stephen Spender, whose own *September Journal* (1940) was initiated under similar circumstances in the autumn of 1939 as a 'partly public and partly personal' sense of shock mixed 'two kinds of defeat into one compound record of the end of hopes'<sup>12</sup>; in later years Spender himself suggested that this record was indeed too personal.<sup>13</sup> The affinity Vaughan felt for Spender's emotional honesty, pacifism, and love for the German people prompted his own recollections of visiting Austria in 1930, 'the period Spender was writing about' (13.07.40; J3, pp.218-23). As addressed in the second chapter of this study, these recollections were highly idealized, informed no doubt by his desire to support Spender's text and his opinions on pre-war Germany. Vaughan remained an avid reader throughout the serialization of the 'September Journal'. After almost a year of his own journal-writing, Vaughan clearly felt qualified to critique Spender's text, beginning an entry: 'I got parts two and three [...] It falls off a little from the quality of quiet sadness in the first part. Perhaps that was inevitable when the first stimulating shock of war had soured into staleness.' (13.08.40; J4, p.29) Given the aforementioned similarities in the commencement of their respective journals, this critique can be read as containing a coded warning, made by Vaughan to himself, about inevitable declines in incident and, consequently, quality. Evaluating Spender's journal helps him to evaluate his own: 'I like his idea of writing a Journal in three levels of time in which he moves along as he chooses. It is what I am doing really, but never thought of in words.' He also

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<sup>12</sup> Hynes, p.378

<sup>13</sup> Spender, *The Thirties and After*, p.9

recognizes in Spender 'a touch of the weakness that is also in me': the need for comfort and security, for 'a fire side and rain against the windows and another's body'. It must be noted that Vaughan draws attention to Spender being 'ashamed of this weakness', whereas he doesn't 'feel that way'; in this respect he insinuates that his own journal-writing benefits from a self-awareness that accepts weaknesses as necessary and worthy of examination. He considers how good it would be to have someone with whom he could speak to about such things, suggesting that his relationship with the poet's text currently has the intimacy of a dialogue (p.30). Yet reading Spender does also aid him in reflecting on his relations with others, as when he finds a useful truth in the description of knowing people who are 'all friendliness and surface but lacking true depth' (p.35).

In the early volumes of Vaughan's journal the largely positive influence of Spender is apparent and acknowledged. Vaughan also derives benefit from reading life-writers whom he enjoys, and therefore admires, far less. One such figure is Julien Green, whose journal (1919-98) he persists with reading despite professing a lack of enjoyment. Vaughan uses Green as an illustration of why journal-writing every day is not preferable:

I formed a fairly clear idea of him after the first twenty pages, but I do not know him any better after two hundred. That is the trouble with a daily journal, it has no comprehensive design unless one is a person developing at a uniform rate within a steadily unravelling pattern of circumstance [...] to read it consecutively is like jumping an endless row of hurdles (03.08.40; J3, p.247)

This assessment of Green's journal-writing comes, significantly, a page after Vaughan's views on the evils of deliberating too long over a sentence and immediately prior to 'the story of Robert' (in the same entry), an allegedly impulsive act of writing that contrasts with Green's measured, quotidian approach. Vaughan's complaint as to the repetitious nature of Green's journal could be interpreted as predicting a future reader for his own journal, although given his accounts of re-reading we cannot assume this could mean anyone other than himself. Vaughan's reference to 'design' should not be confused with a premeditated architecture that would contradict his belief in a spontaneous, intuitive practice motivated by need for expression rather than daily duty; instead, 'design' in this context should be understood as the decision of when or when not to write – a decision that retrospectively reveals a pattern of thought. Vaughan clearly hoped that his journal would reveal some kind of 'progression and development of thought or idea', voicing concerns that his journal currently lacked such a quality in an entry that revisits his reading of Green (25.08.40; J4, p.84). Even when he did not especially admire a

work of life-writing, the experience proved useful in prompting reflections on his own practice.

Vaughan's reading was leading him to re-evaluate his journal-writing on two fronts. Firstly, he was sporadically concerned with his alleged lack of technical knowledge. In an entry dated days earlier he claims to be at 'that point when I realize that I know nothing whatever about writing' (13.08.40; J4, p.33). He feels 'sick' at never having thought to learn and proceeds to exaggerate the effort required to rectify this: 'if I want to write it will take me several years['] concentrated and exclusive study, exclusive of painting and strumming on the piano, and I know that I cannot pay that price.' The extent of Vaughan's exaggeration betrays a competitive impulse and his belief in a standard against which his journal-writing must now be measured. Only a matter of days later, in the entry that ultimately revisits his reading of Green, he declares having no 'ambition to be a writer', yet this claim is complicated by his concerns of being 'untrained' and having mistaken writing for a 'techniqueless' art (25.08.40; J4, pp.83-4). Such concerns do not wholly contradict Vaughan's commitment to spontaneity in his journal-writing, for it is 'spontaneous writing' itself that he claims he is trying to achieve but is untrained in. This can be understood simply as the embarrassment symptomatic of re-reading one's own words. More importantly, the second and greater issue with his writing was the aforementioned need to see a progression and development of his thoughts and ideas. Vaughan's autobiographical project needed to be more than an account of his past: it had to document intellectual growth. This seems to have been the matter of greater import by virtue of it being the point at which he arrives at this entry's conclusion. Having bemoaned what he perceives, upon re-reading, as the 'static themes' in his journal thus far, Vaughan concedes, 'Perhaps all journal [*sic*] suffer this defect. Certainly I found it so in Julien Green's, and it made the reading tedious.' (p.85) He acknowledges here not only a personal limitation, but a possible limitation of the journal as a medium. Vaughan's reading would have to extend wider in search of new ideas, and the writing in his journal would change accordingly.

Vaughan's desire for his journal-writing to evidence the growth of his ideas recalls his ambition to evolve his 'life philosophy' (19.03.40; J2, pp.176-7) – an ambition that predated, yet predicted, the recalibration of his journal as a serious autobiographical project from the third volume onwards. Vaughan fancied that he had some basic grounding in philosophy and enough certainly to scoff at C. E. M. Joad's popular overview *Philosophy for Our Times* (1940), which he dismissed as

'rather 1925 in spirit' and summarised thusly: 'He's a bit of an old woman and I'm not sure that I shall benefit greatly by plowing through his sugar-coated rehash of the philosophers.' (21.02.40; J2, p.52) A year later, with his autobiographical project underway, Vaughan was once again receptive to the textual transmission of a philosophy. He discovered new philosophies not by reading the established philosophers or overviews of their work, but through literature. He returned to his journal in March 1941 with an entry bereft of a date and bearing instead the grand title 'Sometime in March' (J5, pp.15-20). Whenever Vaughan had neglected his journal he provided a reason and this entry is no different, beginning: 'I am not writing much now because I am too busy living to write.' (p.15) Unlike previous and subsequent attempts to justify his neglect of the journal, this entry communicates not contrition but a blustery announcement of a greater purpose; he calls his writing 'a substitute for living' and an escape from his existence, which is nothing uncharacteristic, yet he continues by denying 'the same urgent need to look inwards' of late and proceeds to elaborate, albeit somewhat cryptically, upon the education he has recently undertaken. Of course, the very fact that he excitedly records this in his journal testifies to its centrality to his life, and not least its expanded remit as the record of his intellectual growth. In other words, the opening words of this entry are not a dismissal of the journal but the proclamation of a triumphant return. He describes his 're-entry into the world of ideas, of men, of letters, via Vic + others'. He reports, 'I have come up against ideas, philosophies which are new to me' and explains their centre is the 'Blake-Dostoievsky-Berdaev-Mann conception'<sup>14</sup> of the creative individual. This awkward conjoining of anachronistic figures betrays Vaughan's predisposition for a grand narrative model of human endeavour, for a comparative approach to the arts that looked across periods for recurrent themes or continuities of philosophy. In this entry he is enthusiastic but vague, reeling off, with no further elucidation, such intellectual quandaries as: 'the search for reconciliation of irreconcilables. The Abyss of Infinite possibility and the form of Reason. The beauty and knowledge paradox.' (p.16) At least such large, ill-defined ideas led him to re-evaluate the 'struggling of Guildford and the earlier volumes' of his journal as 'not the mark of a failure, but the inevitable heritage of an artist'. This, however, leaves him very much at the start of his journey and, as yet, 'no nearer a solution'. Vaughan sustained himself on grand yet vague questions as a means to stimulate intellectual enquiry without a specific end-point; as the fourth chapter of this study

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<sup>14</sup> The third of these conjoined names is likely a misspelt reference to the Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev who wrote on subjects including creativity and individualism.

details, this indefinite search would later be refigured as the calling of, and the mark of, the true artist.

It is clear that Vaughan's engagement with new philosophical ideas was largely attributable to his discovery of Marcel Proust and T. S. Eliot. On a new page in the same March journal entry, he lauds their treatments of time in their respective literary forms of the novel and the poem. First he praises Proust's 'tireless rummaging through the scrapheap of the past for those jewels of eternity which link the present the future, to timeless ecstasy' (p.17). In this description, Vaughan offers a more personal and hopeful image than that of Walter Benjamin's 'angel of history' who 'sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet'<sup>15</sup>. He then celebrates 'Eliot and his deeper penetration of Time' and quotes the first two lines of *Burnt Norton* (1936), which had been re-published that year: 'Time present + time past are both perhaps present in Time future'. Vaughan's earlier writing suggests a predisposition for such a mystical notion of temporal simultaneity; he had previously expressed, in his undated introductory page to the fourth volume, a belief in 'this illusion which gives reality ^only^ to a fictitious present' and which 'attempts to dispose of the past in forgetfulness [*sic*] and the future beyond the limits of imagination' (J4, p.1). He had posited an alternative to such an illusion, arguing that 'all is really one continuous reality, sensible in the medium of time but not disconnected by time'. While these words preceded any engagement with Eliot in the journal they likely indicate that he was already becoming familiar with such concepts, albeit from alternative sources or appropriations of Eliot. Nevertheless, the entry titled 'Sometime in March' marks the first sustained engagement with the ideas of Eliot as transmitted through his poetry and essays.

Vaughan was particularly impressed by Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) and its dense, allusory evocation of a derelict culture. The idea of 'a Waste Land', one that had greater relevance than ever following the apocalyptic rumblings that closed the 1930s, allowed Vaughan to situate himself within a concept and a theory of history, bestowing retrospective significance on his trials and anxieties thus far. He liked the idea of being a victim of cultural dereliction because it offered further explanation of his outsider status: 'V [Vic] + the others are the future, the new horizon beyond the Waste Land – I would rather not follow, I feel old and tired but life keeps me on my feet all the time here' ('Sometime in March'; J5, p.18). Here

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<sup>15</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' (1940), in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York, NY: Schocken Books), pp.253-64; p.257

Vaughan hands over responsibility to the younger generation with whom he is fraternizing whilst depicting himself as a weary wanderer akin to the speaker of the fifth part of Eliot's poem. He quotes the poem's first line, 'April is the cruellest month', imbuing his own title 'Sometime in March' with added significance by suggesting that a time of trial and hardship is fast approaching. Despite the lamentations of his advancing age, Vaughan claims to be 'changing in spite of myself', balancing out his narrative of being left behind with the account of intellectual growth he had so desired; he provides further evidence of growth by regarding his journal-writing of a year ago as 'an old skin that I have shed'. The fragmentary nature of Eliot's poem allows Vaughan to account for the fragmentary nature of his own thoughts: 'I pin these fleeting chips of thoughts to paper'. He declares: 'I am living with universal and timeless problems, Art and life and death and Time, and no longer with temporal and personal ones.' (p.19) Rather than expanding on the precise nature of such problems beyond grand abstract nouns, he emphasizes the necessity for such problems to be addressed experientially, to be lived, if he is to develop: 'These are the threads that must be woven [...] in my spirit, in the fibres and tissues of my being. Otherwise they will remain as they are now, intellectual concepts.' (pp.19-20) Here we find the first significant instance in Vaughan's journal of an argument for a holistic approach linking the philosophical to the emotional and the creative, forming an integrated way of life only through which the individual's potential can be fully realized.

Reading and engaging with Eliot re-aligned Vaughan's expectations of the purpose of literature, which he now understood as the transmission of philosophical ideas. There is evidence that this re-alignment affected, for a time, his reading of other life-writers. In the opening lines of a journal entry he admires 'Isherwood's Berlin Diary – Reuben Island'<sup>16</sup> for its 'careful and exact drawing' (01.04.41; J5, p.21). He is fascinated by 'self identification' and the benefits of such reading: 'By seeing a section of your life from outside you are able to get it into perspective. To estimate its real value or valuelessness.' However his transcribing of Vic's thoughts on such literature suggests that Vaughan agrees with him or has at least been re-considering what can be learned from reading the lives of others: 'Vic dismisses it because it does no more than report. It leaves you still in the waste Land. The characters are not symbols of anything beyond themselves. It is photography, skilfull [*sic*] and expert, but no more.' Perhaps Vaughan is alluding here to

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<sup>16</sup> Vaughan has misspelt the name of this chapter, the correct title of which is: 'On Reugen Island (Summer 1931)'.

Isherwood's oft-quoted declaration, 'I am a camera'<sup>17</sup>, whilst willing to entertain the limitations of reportage – 'passive, recording, not thinking'<sup>18</sup> – as an approach in literature. He immediately follows by arguing that, 'The quality of Eliot is that he has gone beyond the Waste Land. In E. Coker [*East Coker* (1940)] he points a way out'. He also lauds *Death in Venice* (1912), in which 'Mann too sums up, uses his characters as symbols to paint a philosophy' (pp.21-2). Vaughan was now convinced of the need for radical modes of literary expression.

In his next entry, seemingly well-rehearsed judging from his fluent hand and the presence of only three very minor corrections, Vaughan makes his stance apparent. He begins by considering how one may transcend time through meditation on one's bed, before declaring:

The old moulds of thought and expression are insufficient now. The shaded lamp, the white ashes, the cigarette smoke, the leaf on the window pane. They are outworn and will not hold the meaning of black still night where terror is a long way off, unheard. (02.04.41; J5, pp.26-7)

Here Vaughan lists images and conventions that are no longer relevant to the new aims of literature, suggesting their unsuitability in communicating the vague threat that exists beyond their objective reality. He proposes a new language and system of signs, for in the same entry he states his conviction that literature's noble endeavours should make no concessions to popularity or even intelligibility:

You cannot blame the poet because the common man cannot understand him. It is not his fault if the old metaphors, end rhymes and phrases, made meaningless by abuse and common usage, no longer serve; if he has to invent difficult imperfect metaphor to convey difficult meanings. (p.27)

This call is reminiscent of, and likely informed by, Eliot's assertion in 1921 that modern poetry 'must be *difficult*' in order to translate the 'great variety and complexity' of modern civilization into 'various and complex results'<sup>19</sup>. Vaughan supports this stance by arguing that there are 'no longer any simple things to be said' (pp.27-8), and by stressing the need to reinvent staid poetic conventions. Yet his references to 'the common man' and 'common usage' cannot help but recall the class-based elitism endemic amongst those at the vanguard of early twentieth-century intellectual culture – those who, according to John Carey, sought to 'exclude

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<sup>17</sup> Christopher Isherwood, *Goodbye to Berlin* (London: Vintage, 1998), p.1

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> T. S. Eliot, 'The Metaphysical Poets' (1921), in *Selected Essays 1917-1932* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1932), pp.241-50; p.248

the masses from culture' by cultivating obscurity<sup>20</sup>. Vaughan proffers that, 'Now is the search for the point of fusion of all the simple things of all times', ostensibly supporting Eliot's approach of cohering fragments, archaisms and allusions into a whole (p.28). He then returns to the issue of 'the common man', clarifying that to 'accuse the artist of contempt' for him 'because he does not write within the experience of the common man is peurile [*sic*] and obstructionist' (pp.28-9). He makes his point on the need for progress, but overtones of elitism persist when Vaughan aligns himself with a cause: 'We do not claim to be right or to have succeeded, or to be better' (p.29). Crucially, Vaughan's use of 'we' evidences his growing identification with the literary elite through his reading, conversations, and subsequent formulation into words through journal-writing.

The influence of Eliot was balanced somewhat by that of Proust, who provided a philosophy of the individual that looked inward for meaning as Eliot's looked outward to culture, history, and mythology. Vaughan's concern with situating himself within a cultural conception of Eliot's 'Waste Land' had caused him, 'Sometime in March', some discomfort regarding the continued pursuit of 'this introspective technique' of journal-writing (p.20). This may have been a throwaway remark, given the new ideas with which he claimed he was contending, but it seems that Vaughan's engagement with Proust came at a time when his own autobiographical project needed fresh impetus; where better to look than in the work of a writer who, in Joseph Conrad's words, had 'pushed analysis to the point when it becomes creative'<sup>21</sup>? We find in earlier volumes of the journal the evidence for Vaughan being predisposed to the Proustian notion of memories being recalled with short-lived, burning clarity. He had written in Spring of the previous year of a perfect time when one hears a piece of music in a way that it can never be experienced again; considering this phenomenon with regard to a piece by Rachmaninoff, he reflected that, 'its magic was overfamiliar, curiously expected and lost. Now I know that it won't come back again.' (04.03.40; J2, p.106) This description recalls the idealized, perfect experiences as presented in his autobiographical episodes. Upon discovering Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-27), Vaughan embraced the idea of involuntarily recalling memories. Having pondered Proust's search for meaning in 'the memory of the experience' and 'the memory of the past regained in the present' in an immediately preceding entry (02.04.41; J5, p.23), Vaughan claims to have 'the experience of a moment of

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<sup>20</sup> Carey, pp.16-7

<sup>21</sup> Joseph Conrad, 'Proust as Creator', in *Marcel Proust: an English Tribute*, ed. C. K. Scott Moncrieff (London: Chatto & Windus, 1923), pp.126-8; p.126



regained time' whilst attending the opening of *Lac des cygnes* (08.04.41; J5, p.31). He rewords this as 'the experience of many moments combined and fused into a single sensation which carried in it the essence of years of the past, a state of extravagant emotional excitement' (pp.31-2). His vocabulary here recalls that of Moncrieff's translation when, having tasted the madeleine dipped in tea, Proust's narrator experiences the 'new sensation' carrying 'a precious essence'<sup>22</sup>. Vaughan proves invested in Proust's conception of recall as mysterious, fragile, yet potent in its distillation of an impression of the past into a moment. After digressing at length on the stimulating experience of watching ballet, he returns to his moment of regained time in which he felt himself 'back in Covent Garden, in the warm red plush, the curtain burning in a gold and crimson fire at the footlights [...] I saw Dick's profile silhouetted against it in front of me' (p.34). The richness of description here reveals the influence of Proust's representation of involuntary recall as a sensory overload.

The moment of 'regained' time provided Vaughan with a new autobiographical convention to employ in his journal-writing, one that carried a literary prestige whilst mystifying the workings of the inner life. Observing a haughty RAF youth in a café, he experiences a 'migration into the past', the 'long progressing of echoes of like moments in other cafés' (24.04.41; J5, p.39). He employs such poetic licence to justify his gazing at the young man, insisting that by 'looking long at him' he was 'looking back into the past, down the empty vistas of death and longing and unfulfillment' [*sic*] (p.40). Elsewhere, his account of a walk in the countryside is followed by a jarring interjection: 'The weariness of words stopped me writing more. I cannot recapture by outliving the flesh and bones of the experience ~~to recapture~~ the illusive essence which remains a fragrance, a richly embroidered tapestry of indistinct and overlapping sensations.' (17.05.41; J6, pp.4-5) The language here, ornate yet deliberately vague, conveys what Vaughan believes to be the ephemeral nature of a memory that he cannot voluntarily retrieve – the memory of a lost paradise. Vaughan later describes an ultimately more disquieting experience whilst at the cinema with Bill. He remarks on the atmosphere of the cinema in general, 'so powerful a reminder of time past', and explains, 'A trifling incident released a lost moment in my memory, a Proustian glimpse of lost time.' (28.07.41; J6, p.47) The moment in question was a New Years Eve celebration in Austria, during which Vaughan and his brother danced at an inn with 'the local peasants'. He recalls the thickness of the smoke and the pungency of the air as he

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<sup>22</sup> Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time, Vol I: Swann's Way*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff & Terence Kilmartin (London: Vintage, 2005), p.51

writes, emphasizing again the multisensory quality of memory. The account of this distant night continues for four pages before he is jerked back by a terrible realization: ‘Dick is dead, his body rotting in the earth of France or Germany [...] Mother is lonely in a bombed and burnt London. There is no future + the past is difficult to recapture, and most of it seems pointless and wasted.’ (p.52) The sentiment expressed here is bleak, one in which everything, and everyone, is beyond retrieval: the past, the decimated capital, even his brother’s body. Yet it would seem that only the mysterious inner workings of the mind can recover what is lost. In an entry written almost a year later, Vaughan quotes from Rainer Maria Rilke’s 7<sup>th</sup> elegy (“Nirgends Geliebte wird Welt sein als innen”) and compares the poet’s sentiments with those of Proust, for whom ‘only that which has already existed within us is real’ (20.05.42; J10, p.36). Vaughan continued to laud the inner life, believing the interior voyage to be a worthy subject for Proust’s voluminous novel.

Approaching his 29<sup>th</sup> birthday Vaughan wrote an evaluation of himself in which he regarded his literary education amongst his proudest achievements. Despite feeling ‘still so unformed, unsettled and immature’ on the cusp of this daunting age, he claims shortly after, ‘I feel neither old nor young. Neither belonging to this age nor to any other.’ (19.08.41; J6, pp.82-3) Here he confirms his sympathy with literary arguments as to the timelessness, or at the least temporal distortion of, individual experience. He continues by claiming, ‘In a way this year has been fuller in experience than most. I have done more, felt more, experienced more widely.’ (p.83) He lists his achievements: ‘I have filled 4 or 5 note books with pen drawing, perhaps achieved a more careful and searching approach [...] I have discovered and understood Proust + Eliot and ~~English poetry generally~~ some modern poets’ (pp.84-5). He alludes here to the positive influence of his literary and philosophical enquiries on his burgeoning visual practice. He also posits Proust and Eliot as writers to be understood and whose work demands a degree of aptitude and commitment from a reader. He evaluates his recent journal-writing as having ‘diminished in length and intensity’, owing to a more sociable living arrangement and ‘the original impetus of analysing myself as a failure having lost its uniqueness and novelty’ (pp.85-6). This evaluation supports his belief in the diminishing returns of individual experience, and also provides evidence that the journal, even if it is receiving less attention of late, has expanded beyond its original remit to become the account of intellectual growth that Vaughan had long hoped for.

Upon finishing *À la recherche*, having closed ‘the last of the Twelve volumes, begun over a year ago’, he writes an entry devoted almost entirely to his assessment

of 'Proust's incomparable novel' (25.10.41; J7, pp.49-50). Its completion marks a personal milestone for Vaughan, who suggests that 'Proust would have appreciated' the circumstances of 'hyperaesthetic self consciousness' in which he finished the final volume 'at the close of a summer' (p.52). Nevertheless, Vaughan is frank in his critique. He regrettably reports a steep decline in the 'enthusiasm + delight of discovery' he had first experienced, claiming that from 'the death of Albertine' he dragged himself 'wearily to the end' (p.50). He proceeds to claim that Proust's style becomes 'wearisome', and that in the third chapter of *Le temps retrouvé* (1927) the novelist's main philosophical ideas are at their most opaque and confusing. The real 'tragedy' for Vaughan is that Proust 'never lived to complete the revision nor Monkrief [sic] to complete the translation' (pp.51-2). Only days later he has 'reread the philosophic part of Chap III of Time Regained, this time with clearer understanding' (30.10.41; J7, pp.54-5). He quotes, "Happiness serves hardly any purpose than to make unhappiness possible", a phrase reminiscent of that which he had approvingly plucked from Graham Greene's *A Gun for Sale* (1936)<sup>23</sup>, and declares admiringly that, 'There is an uncompromising finality about Proust's philosophy of sorrow. If one can accept it, it really solves the problem of misery.' (p.55) He seizes upon Proust's suggestion of the inevitability of frustration, one that offers a consolatory experience in which the allegedly unfinished (or at least unrevised) version of the text – not to mention what he perceived to be a diminishing of the novel's potency as it wore on – is an unavoidable circumstance. Most importantly, Vaughan's quoting of this phrase in his journal assimilates it into his own growing philosophy, while writing a revision of his response to *Le temps*' third chapter evidences his intellectual growth.

There is abundant evidence in Vaughan's journal that his reading was inspiring him to express his ideas in more concertedly experimental literary forms. In an entry dated half in French, 'Juin 16<sup>th</sup>', he begins with a passage of poetic prose on the ripeness of summer, building a rhythmic accumulation of heady imagery in which, 'Wool next [to] the skin pricks the thin membranes of memory' (16.06.41; J6, p.20). His attempt to convey the sensations 'torturing the brittle threads of memory' continues his interest in the multisensory rush of recall and carries a distinctly Proustian flavour. He soon dabbles in a form more recognizable as poetry, discernible by its division into a line structure, with a piece he titles 'Leave train' (30.07.41; J6, p.55). Following almost two pages of journal-writing on his general

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<sup>23</sup> '[...] happiness made her grave at the thought of all the things which might destroy it.'; Graham Greene, *A Gun for Sale* (London: William Heinemann & The Bodley Head, 1973), p.6. Quoted by Vaughan in the journal entry dated 12<sup>th</sup> August 1940 (J4, p.27).

weariness and lack of enthusiasm for day-to-day living, this piece translates his malaise into an ostensibly everyday scene but with a somewhat mythic context; ‘ancient sunlight’ rolls dustily along platforms at a station, ‘Observing the annual reappearance of July | Without comment.’ The influence of Eliot is apparent in the depiction of an arid cycle of events in which the late afternoon ‘tastes dry in every mouth’ of those travellers who carry their loads while the mechanisms of modern transport, encapsulated by the ‘well oiled’ train moving out on ‘polished rails’, proceed with sinister efficiency. By the year’s end it is clear that Vaughan harboured serious literary ambitions, recording in his journal that he has been neglecting it rather for the sake of ‘the series of drawings for Lehmann + the story of our life which I am also trying to write for him’ (31.12.41; J8, p.5). The next month he announces the completion of ‘The Way We Live Now’, which was in fact the grand title of the series in *Penguin New Writing*, edited by Lehmann, to which he was contributing (15.01.42; J8, p.29).<sup>24</sup> Considering Julian Symons’ description of *Penguin New Writing* as a ‘Thirties periodical’, the only one to survive into the 1940s from the prior decade’s intellectual climate<sup>25</sup>, it is understandable why Vaughan, his pessimism so indebted to 1930s intellectualism, was keen to contribute. Yet he seems remarkably dismissive of his efforts to write this piece and intimates, in the aforementioned entry, that towards the end he grew bored of it – if only, in all likelihood, to temper any expectations of praise.

From this point onwards the wartime volumes of the journal contained new forms of literary writing, their nature as self-contained creative endeavours often apparent from Vaughan’s use of line breaks and titles. Examples include a lyrical passage on the approach of Spring (08.04.42; J9, p.21); a passage of romantic imagery that follows a consideration of Spender’s critique of A. E. Housman in relation to John Donne (14.06.42; J11, pp.15-6); and a twenty-line poem entitled ‘Prayer in Spring’ in which the poet implores the sun to bestow its restorative powers upon the poet (‘Burn out the shadows from my eyes, | And the memory of the long roads of winter.’; 18.03.43; J14, p.5). It was important for Vaughan that these new forms should be integrated into his journal in order to evidence his intellectual and creative growth. Their presence amongst entries that recorded such new purchases as poetry by Louis MacNeice, Auden, and Rilke demonstrated the creative application of his reading. These more expressionistic pieces also created

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<sup>24</sup> The content of this piece was Vaughan’s account of unloading casualties from Dunkirk; this account was a heavily reworked version of his journal entry dated 19<sup>th</sup> June 1940 (J3, pp.143-9). It was published in *Penguin New Writing*, no.12, April 1942, pp.9-13.

<sup>25</sup> Symons, pp.146-7

aggrandizing myths with a consolatory effect. One journal entry is devoted entirely to an eight-page prose narrative – a ‘Kafka-esque parable’ as Vaughan later noted in the list of contents on the cover of the fourteenth volume – in which a nameless runner has entered a race with no apparent purpose or destination: ‘It was a long time ago now the day the race started. No one remembers exactly why it started or who suggested the idea [...] He started along with the rest.’ (07.04.43; J14, p.13) The pristine nature of the text, with no corrections made at all after p.14, suggests that it was either rehearsed elsewhere or at the very least long-deliberated over, indicating the importance for Vaughan that it should feature in the pages of his journal and not separately. We also find, in its final lines, an uplifting message on the nature of ambition that equates the allegorical ‘he’ with Vaughan himself:

And he went on for some Time in a very satisfied state, confident not only in the direction he was going which although it often diverged from the main signposted avenues, nevertheless always kept the others in sight, but also that he could hold his own with them, and even outstrip them when he felt inclined. (pp.19-20)

The engagement with themes of ‘direction’ and competition with peers betrays the autobiographical motivation for this piece and suggests the consolatory effect of Vaughan’s translation of such ideas into a literary, creative product integrated into his journal.

As Vaughan’s powers of description developed, he was able to achieve new effects in terms of detaching himself to create a more authoritative voice. Some entries blur the line between the registers of journal-writing and fictional prose narrative, creating new effects. In an entry headed ‘Sedan Chair – Bath’ that closes the ninth volume and continues into the tenth, Vaughan undertakes an extensive description of two groups seated in public: an old man with three women, and a boy with a girl (25.04.42; J9, pp.28-34 & J10, pp.1-3). He begins, ‘One must admit after all that the boy was the only one in the room worth noticing’, establishing through his choice of pronoun a detached and sardonic tone (J9, p.28). He describes the scene of the man with the three women as one of stunted communication and polite laughter, resulting in his startling assessment that ‘it is difficult to see for what reason they continued to remain living’ (p.32). Here Vaughan’s exercising of his descriptive powers under the guise of a detached narrator legitimizes his authority to pass judgement. Whereas previously such scenes had been informed by disconnection and longing, here Vaughan’s abilities as a writer bring the entire scene, the entire composition, under control. The entire entry dated 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1942 is another exercise in control, a character study of his friend Freddie (referred to as

'he' and only named after more than two full pages) that focusses on Freddie's intellectual and emotional development and how he came to read the classics of philosophy from Plato to Schopenhauer (J10, pp.7-11). The details of Freddie's life are provided in a grammatically disciplined, expository prose as if introducing a fictional character: 'The boys used to think him a bit queer always reading like that and he began to wonder if he was perhaps a bit queer. Then he got a bit anxious about his health.' (p.8) Maintaining the register of prose fiction, we find no use of 'I' in reference to Vaughan until the final paragraph on p.10 when he describes asking Freddie a question. Writing, 'He doesn't understand this love business', Vaughan's use of colloquialism demonstrates a newfound aptitude with focalization through a character, in this case Freddie (p.9). In such journal entries Vaughan is no longer simply the observer of yore but a creative force.

Yet this period of increased creativity exerted new pressures. Vaughan begins a journal entry by remarking that, 'The silliest thing is to be urged to write because one wants to be a writer, rather than because one wants to write.' (04.02.42; J8, p.44) This is a familiar argument that writing should arise from a sincere desire for expression as opposed to an attempt at artifice; as if to demonstrate such desire, his opening words are followed by a line break and a creative piece of writing on a romantic subject directed at an anonymous 'you' who the speaker is struggling to see through obscured vision. And yet there is evidence that in this period Vaughan was feeling, with the weight of his literary education bearing down on him, the pressure of producing creative product, as something to show for his learning. He articulates the creative anxiety brought on by his wider reading and experiences thusly:

The inertia, atrophe [*sic*] of the creative powers through too broad mindedness, too much intelligence, to [*sic*] great self consciousness + consequent scepticism. Creativeness needs absolute self confidence rather than self consciousness, a certain blindness + intolerance to the creative work of others. This is the age of criticism rather than creativeness. (26.04.42; J10, p.3)

Here, Vaughan's intellectualism is refigured as a burden, the result of a process in which his innocence, and ignorance, has been lost. He also implicates the intellectual culture of the period, dubbing it 'the age of criticism', in order to partially absolve himself of such 'self consciousness'. But Vaughan's identification of himself with the intellectual culture of modern writers and philosophers was to blame for such a situation; in the passage quoted above is the evidence that this identification set dangerously high artistic standards. Days later Vaughan begins a journal entry by reprimanding himself: 'Get over this habit of parading nouns and adjectives always in pair [*sic*], filling out the bulk of the sentence without increasing

its meaning.’ (30.04.42; J10, p.4) After a line break he attempts to make amends with a short passage of imagistic writing, flitting between dust, elms, Nissen huts, the full moon, and bombs in a pared-down modernist syntax. He begins the next volume with only a three-line entry articulating his creative anxiety: ‘Becoming absorbed with a sense of one’s own failure; yet if one fails what after all is one but a failure and the world goes on without in any way noticing.’ (23.05.42; J11, p.1) In the following entry, dated three days afterwards, he lashes out at consensus and definitions of artistic success by writing a critique of Beethoven and in doing so attacks the world of high culture from which he fears rejection.

Vaughan envied those who seemed unburdened by high standards and expectations, as evidenced by the following description of Charlie, a comrade whom he admired:

Charlie is a great person because he’s all together and straight like a young tree and grows and lives naturally in one direction. He[’]s full of kindness + love and a vigorous lust with lovely straight teeth and a smile that warms like sunshine.’ (30.05.42; J11, p.4)

Vaughan has, true to form, simplified Charlie (to whom he is clearly attracted) in this passage, but considering his prior complaint of feeling pulled ‘in opposite directions’ (01.06.40; J3, pp.120-1), there is detectable envy implicit in his admiration for Charlie being ‘straight’ and living ‘naturally in one direction’. In the context of Vaughan’s sexuality, such phrases also suggest that he, meanwhile, is living with a double burden that Charlie is free from: that of being creatively frustrated and that of being homosexual. The easy superiority with which Vaughan had often written of himself in relation to those less educated is absent in this admittance: ‘I can’t feel myself superior to him because I have a superior intellect. He just makes me rather ashamed of being intellectual, as something worthless and rather empty.’ (p.5) This despondency is due to nothing disparaging that Charlie has said, but merely to being in his presence and witnessing him so happy and unencumbered. Vaughan proceeds to weigh up the cost of greatness: ‘Rimbaud was a great poet but a frightful loathsome person, Verlaine worse as a person. Now where does greatness lie, in the person or in their work?’ He attempts to situate his differences from Charlie in a narrative of ultimate benefit and artistic realization, reasoning, ‘Rimbaud to be a great poet had to be an awful person – Rimbaud.’ His figuring of the French poet has much in common with Eliot’s assessment of Baudelaire, in a 1930 essay, in which he considered that ‘it is better, in a paradoxical way, to do evil than to do nothing’ and concluded that ‘Baudelaire was man enough

for damnation'<sup>26</sup>. Vaughan continues: 'I can't reconcile this human greatness of the Charlies with its apparent uselessness. It[']s more use being Rimbaud. Rimbaud matters to the history of mankind.' (pp.6-7) He puts himself in illustrious company by reassuring himself as to the necessary difficulties of a creative life, but this is a strategy that does nothing to alleviate the burden of expectations.

Vaughan turned his difficulties and disillusionment with intellectualism outwards and became more frustrated in his critiques of literature and the arts. Calling Rilke 'almost too fastidious, too hypersensitive', he closed the journal's tenth volume by remarking, 'I'd like someone to say something rich + profound + quite simple that I could understand somewhere.' (21.05.42, p.38) Having re-read Eliot's '[l]ast three long poems', he is less convinced by the transmission of philosophical ideas through poetry and declares that he is 'doubtful whether this sort of poetry is successful' (02.07.42; J11, p.27). Noting the repetitions of certain lines in these poems, he states: 'There seems almost too much self consciousness, to [sic] much of the machinery and scaffolding of creation still left in.' (p.28) He admits that this approach is 'partly the source of their appeal' to him but does not retract his opinion as to their overall effectiveness. Crucially it is his own work, his visual practice, that is suffering at this moment; he dismisses his attempts at painting as 'imitative and self-indulgent', an occupation 'used to justify almost every weakness and failure in other aspects of life' (p.29). He writes, 'The difficulty is to know how far I am still capable of creating myself according to ideal plans', yet proceeds cryptically without specifying what these plans are or what precisely is failing in his practice. He distances himself further from literature in his account of being asked by Lehmann to write 'something on the Waste Land' (p.31). Considering his embrace of Eliot the previous year, Vaughan is surprisingly dismissive of the 'Waste Land' as a relevant conceptualization of modern life:

I think this term is being too loosely applied by the youngsters to designate all that Territory which lies outside their own dynamic, adolescent convictions. I too, conforming to Vic's temperament have helped to create this conception of the Wastelander. But who is the Wastelander now and where is the Wasteland [...] April is no longer the cruelest [sic] month, because cruelty is constant through all months (pp.31-2)

*The Waste Land*, in Leonard Woolf's words, had been 'an immediate success with the young'<sup>27</sup> and Vaughan was likely becoming aware of its ubiquity amongst the

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<sup>26</sup> T. S. Eliot, 'Baudelaire', in *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), pp.419-30; p.429

<sup>27</sup> Richard Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain and the Crisis of Civilization, 1919-1939* (London: Penguin Books, 2010), p.14



literate. Here, Vaughan is doubtless attempting to demonstrate his own development in moving beyond the poem and its core concept, one that he also claims he was responsible for propagating, but he is also attempting an escape from the burden of Eliot's influence.

Vaughan continued to protest against intellectualism in literature by becoming more persistent in the critiques that proliferated in his journal. In his critique of Spender's *The Burning Cactus* (1936), which he insists lacks cohesion due to its density of imagery and ideas, Vaughan claims that his tastes have changed as this poem exhibits 'faults that I should have liked two years ago but which annoy me now' (04.07.42; J12, p.1) He asks with some annoyance in the same entry why when a writer wishes to lay out his intellectual credentials 'must he read Rilke' (p.2). He implies a kind of ownership of the poet, continuing, 'Odd that this didn't annoy me before I knew and liked Rilke myself'. He expresses his tiredness of '[t]his special advertising for Rilke, Proust, Kafka, ~~I become irritated~~ it seems precious, exclusive and somehow unbalanced'. He also seems to retract his previously stated desire for linguistic experimentation: 'The introduction of abstruse poetic imagery into prose is awkward and unconvincing, serving to obscure rather than clarify a passage.' (p.3) But the most alarming aspect of this entry is his re-evaluation of Spender, who he feels uses poetry as a veil 'instead of subjecting himself to the reality' of things. Vaughan's conclusion, so far from the adoration of two years prior, is that, 'He Spenderizes things too much'. Yet of all the early influences from whom he tried to escape in this period the historian Oswald Spengler proved the most striking example. He writes, 'In the course of conversation with Cosmo I came nearest to shaking myself free of the Spenglerian bias of my historical outlook' (25.07.42; J12, p.22). Having expanded on Cosmo's own critique, he laments, 'If only I had read history instead of Spengler's theory of history at 21.' This statement seems an attempt by Vaughan to ascertain the cause as to why he had not developed in the intended direction. He also seems to acknowledge that *The Decline of the West* is, as A. J. Toynbee had proffered in his 1931 pamphlet *World Order or Downfall*, 'not suitable for beginners'<sup>28</sup>. Most interestingly, he makes in this entry a resolution to immerse himself in the study of history and the arts, but then ironically undercuts this by alluding to all of his previous resolutions to self-educate, the implication being that they have all failed (p.23). Vaughan reaches a point where his engagement with literature and his literary ambitions have left him frustrated; in somewhat garbled prose, he writes a very brief idea about a 'a young awakened

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.34

youth' who is 'seeking substance' in an 'exclusive overintellectual world' (11.07.42; J12, p.6), an imaginative enactment of his own ostensible exclusion that nevertheless, in its very existence, offers a consolatory confirmation of his creative powers.

### iii. An Autobiographical Project (Reprise)

Throughout wartime Vaughan returned to his journal, evidencing its importance as a record of growth and as a navigational tool. Upon the relocation of the Corps from Codford, Vaughan underscores the importance of maintaining the journal: 'I hope the enforced isolation of life here will sharpen my faculties again to the point where I can recommence this journal seriously.' (21.07.41; J6, p.38) In professing the need for sharpness and seriousness he confirms the journal as an authoritative document requiring serious attention, and does so again in suggesting that the journal will aid him in navigating back through his past: 'Sooner or later I feel I have got to go back to Jan of this year and take up the threads again. Ultimately the solution can only be a solitary one and my life, lived alone.' (p.39) Over a year later, he explains how the 'loved memory' of Codford has galvanized him to end a period of neglecting the journal: 'The break in the thread, return to Bulford, the misery and sordidness have thrown me back into myself and induced the reopening of this journal, closed for so long when living and doing took the place of idle consolatory confession.' (27.10.42; J13, p.15) Although ostensibly denigrating the journal here as a comforting indulgence, one opened only when not busy 'living and doing', the recurrence of the 'thread' motif confirms that the journal provided a crucial point of reference for whenever Vaughan perceived his emotional or developmental continuity to have been broken or pursued too far in an undesirable direction. He continues, 'Once I can overcome the chronic misery of this place I shall start again, or try to.' Vaughan's journal documents many false dawns, for the next entry is not written until some months after, beginning: 'For so long I have written nothing. Simply at first because I lived outwardly and doing. I cannot trace all the history of this winter. Now spring is threatening.' (2[?].02.43; J13, p.16)<sup>29</sup> He writes melodramatically on his 'paralysis of the volition', employing a number of overwrought metaphors until he settles on that of light and dark: 'I am full of beginnings which get no further because I return to the dark, to the secret inward tininess.' (pp.16-7)

<sup>29</sup> Vaughan's handwriting makes it difficult to ascertain if this date is 'Feb. 25' or 'Feb. 28'.

Three entries later, beneath the underlined heading 'Return from leave', Vaughan undertakes an appraisal of the journal thus far in order to chart his emotional development and intellectual growth. Despite the period of neglect to which he had previously alluded, this entry evidences the important function of the journal as the record of Vaughan's life and learning thus far. He begins:

Time has come to attempt a resumé. The need to write this journal ceased last august when a tide of action carried me forward and left no Time or desire to analize [*sic*] or investigate the ~~surroundings~~ cargo. Now [...] there is Time; and now that I have felt once more a disturbance of the heart, the need to look around me. (14.03.43; J13, p.26)

He follows this with an update as to his present situation and a retrospective assessment of how he arrived at this point. Over the subsequent pages he declares himself a current member of two circles, that of John Lehmann and that of Graham Sutherland, and implies that the commitments of each have hampered his journal-writing. Vaughan sections off various parts of this twenty-three-page entry with horizontal lines between paragraphs, demonstrating the importance of organizing his 'resumé'. Under a horizontal line on p.38 he begins a new paragraph:

Nearly four years ago this journal started in a mood of utter resignation as a substitute for living and to fulfill [*sic*] the only Task which still seemed possible, an analysis of failure. Loneliness was realized for the first time as an inescapable necessity and under the glamorous influence of its novelty I entered confidently the Territory of myself. (pp.38-9)

Having reflected on the commencement of the journal, he proceeds immediately to summarize the influences on his writing: 'Proust and the war provided the key and the opportunity [;] weakness and Spenders September Journal the need.' (p.39) He admits, somewhat vaguely, 'I overlooked the fact that while thinking backwards I was moving forwards', a retrospective acknowledgement, perhaps, of the progress made in his autobiographical project. He crosses through his description of 'the sudden and unexpected success of a story' (likely the piece written for Lehmann), recognizing the need to first establish the context for his literary endeavours by addressing the subject of the intellectual society he found in the army and the resulting 'headlong rush into literature, the hitherto unknown Territory'. He credits success in the Lehmann circle with completing 'the escape from myself and the return into life', allowing him to declare, 'Now I think I am in sight of maturity'. Newly emboldened, he looks forward: 'the future is taking shape determined largely by the past and present. Is losing its illusion of being the void of infinite possibilities.' (pp.39-40) After another horizontal line drawn between paragraphs,

Vaughan proceeds on various subjects including the resumption of a comparison between Auden and Spender, the beauty of his comrade Bill, and the lessons he has learned from friend and mentor Graham Sutherland. In sectioning off material addressing different subjects – his autobiography, literature, visual art practice – Vaughan demonstrates the importance of the journal in organizing fields of his thought and endeavour. His writing in this entry on the help and influence of Sutherland contains a significant statement as to Vaughan's creative direction: 'The danger of drawing one's impulse to paint from literature [*sic*] rather than life is that it tempts one to overtax the imagination at the expense of real truth.' (p.47) The fourth chapter of this study addresses the resultant search beyond literature, that 'overintellectual world', for a more impulsive and authentic experience.

For the remainder of the war Vaughan continued to revisit his journal and re-orientate himself by engaging once again with his past as the vital context for his present. He writes:

If I had a route and could recognise for certain my direction. If I had some guide against which I could measure the right things to do from the wrong. If I could know which are the right things to write in this Journal and which the wrong. (11.07.43; J16, p.31)

Here he poses a problem and then immediately posits re-reading the journal as an answer. He reasons that 'often the things which give most solace at the time of writing are ultimately meaningless and without significance', whereas, he proposes, 'the things which are most irksome and painful to write at the time [...] are at a later date, when the distance has put them into proper perspective in time, the most significant' (pp.31-2). The implication here is that order, and the narrative of progression that ensues, only becomes apparent over time.

Vaughan continued returning to the journal to explore his childhood and re-inscribe his written account in order to find the genesis of his unhappiness. In an entry headed 'CHILDHOOD TOYS', he is prompted by seeing a model boat, bought by Bill for his child, to reflect on the toy boats he used to sail with Dick. He is amazed by 'how deep a feeling of wretchedness the memory of those days evokes', asking, 'Why were we such unhappy children. Or is it only the memory that is unhappy.' (29.06.43; J16, p.17) He elaborates on his and Dick's childhood anxiety over sailing their comparatively small and cheap boats on the public pond and finds the expectations of their mother that they should enjoy themselves (and her grief at any sign of disappointment) to be the locus of this anxiety. In a later entry he explores his first attempts at cathartically releasing his resentment, recalling how as

a child he would make himself lie in bed and whisper blasphemies against God and his mother until he broke out 'sobbing and shaking with misery', acts that reduced him 'almost to a frenzy of wretchedness' (10.02.44; J18, pp.23-4). He wonders whether all children do this and reflects that he had 'everything as a small child' thanks to the doting of his mother and 'Nanny' (p.24). Only days later, in an entry headed 'Autobiographical', he begins: 'It is somewhere beyond the days at school that I must look for myself.' (15.02.44; J19, p.7) In looking for himself, he re-inscribes in this entry the account of certain childhood events – the smutty talk of other boys, the 'doggy games', asking to see his cousin's genitals – given in his opening entry to the third volume of the journal almost four years prior. It is only by re-establishing this context that Vaughan can push the journal into uncharted territory by confronting his father's departure for the very first time in writing. He cannot remember what age he would have been, but proposes, 'The time of the trouble at home is probably important as it must have been my first contact with the fact of human unhappiness' (p.8). He can remember his mother being distraught one night at dinner and leaving to cry on her bed and reasons his father 'must have been there then' but admits that he 'cannot remember a single thing about him'. Vaughan situates this entry in an ongoing process, leaving himself a note on enquiring into a Miss Dockery ('Investigate: Miss Dockery's – did I board there? Why?'), listing two memories of being at her home, and listing four 'Early obsessions with pain' (p.9). Once again, progress is made while the horizon representing ultimate self-knowledge recedes so that Vaughan and his journal can continue forwards into the future.

It is highly significant that Vaughan once again returned to the motivations behind his autobiographical project at the end of August 1945, a time of great uncertainty at Eden Camp following the end of the war. The opening entry of the twenty-seventh volume is undated and headed 'Introduction to an Autobiography'. It seems another well-rehearsed piece due to Vaughan's neat and evenly spaced handwriting and the presence of unusually few corrections.<sup>30</sup> There is currently no further evidence that Vaughan wrote a separate autobiography outside the journal at this time; nevertheless, it is significant that he chose to weave such an introduction into the fabric of an existing autobiography, and that a new volume of the journal should begin with such a purposeful and renewed statement of autobiographical intent. He begins this entry in a tone that is self-deprecating yet confident in its easy familiarity: 'Probably I shall make a bad job of this story. I am not particularly gifted

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<sup>30</sup> One neatly made correction on p.2; four very minor, and again neat, corrections on p.3; one on p.4; one on p.5.

as a writer and the material I have is not so interesting in itself that it can make much headway on its own.' (p.1) He claims: 'Nor am I naturally a fluent writer. I am not fluent in anything. Spontaneity is to me a consciously desired goal rather than a natural condition of existence [*sic*].' Atop a new page overleaf he asks, 'What is the source of this impulse', leaving the question (characteristically unpunctuated at its end) alone on its own line to allow it space to linger and accumulate the necessary gravity. On a new line he replies: 'I might almost call it a sense of duty. The prime duty of every living man. To try and understand the working of his own spirit.' Vaughan's usage of 'duty' here differentiates his project as being not a chore, as with the daily records of Julien Green, but a responsibility. He then declares: 'Therefore my sole and foremost aim is to set down in these pages the whole truth about myself so far as I am aware of it.' (pp.2-3) By returning to such previously stated tenets of autobiography as responsibility, honesty, and the importance of spontaneity, Vaughan not only communicates here his hopes for the autobiographical writing to come but also his recognition of the centrality of the journal thus far to his emotional and creative life. In a time of uncertainty, Vaughan's return to the idea of an autobiographical project secures the longevity of the journal.

#### 4. Art and the Artist

Vaughan had harboured hopes of being a painter since his teenage years yet the early volumes of the journal did little to address his ambitions. On the occasions his painterly ambitions were addressed they were swiftly downplayed or dashed. In an account of Ted visiting his flat he describes his discomfort with others seeing his home and particularly his paintings, seeing them ‘suddenly through their eyes and being ashamed’ (04.03.40; J2, p.105). This was an aspiring artist who ventured out carrying his paints in an ‘agony of doubt and indecision’ (13.05.40; J3, p.103). On a sojourn to see the official war paintings on show at the National Gallery he finds them ‘exasperating and disappointing’ but reveals his assessments of various artists to be coloured by jealousy: ‘I begrudged them their chance of doing what I should so much like to do myself.’ (23.08.40; J4, pp.80-2) Why did Vaughan believe, with his background and education, that the life of an artist was closed off to him? He writes:

I think I could have been a painter if I had the chance, or the fire and fanatical determination to make my chance. I had neither. Perhaps the last and hardest lesson I have to learn is that I shall never now be a painter [...] I am too civilized to be a painter. (10.03.40; J2, p.123)

Upon leaving Guildford gaol, he enthuses that his energies have been channelled ‘in one direction only, painting’ (22.11.40; J4, p.87). Yet this journal entry descends from a reluctant acknowledgement of his improvements in technique and understanding (p.90) into a negative spiral culminating pages later in the resignation that, ‘I was not born to be a painter’ (p.95). While Vaughan believed that he never had the chance to be a painter, it is more accurate to say that he simply did not have a conception or typology of the artist according to which he could live and work.

By the summer of 1942 Vaughan had grown disillusioned with the company of intellectuals on the page and in person. Having dallied with literature as a creative channel he had found his way back to painting through his friendship with Graham Sutherland. Whereas he once considered himself ‘too civilized to be a painter’, now Vaughan had distanced himself sufficiently from civilization as both a political idea (by being an objector) and a personal idea (by being an observer on society’s side-lines) to begin constructing the type of the fiercely individual artist in whose image he could then construct himself. As the first section of this chapter will elucidate, this process of constructing the artist and constructing himself in accordance with it occurred during a crucial period in 1943 through journal volumes

fifteen to seventeen; in these volumes he set out the credentials and creative processes of the artist whilst writing for the first time in detail on artists and art theory. The second section of this chapter explains how Vaughan's self-construction as an artist set him on the road to post-war success as an artist – a period in which Vaughan largely neglected his journal whilst he built his career as a painter. The third section re-joins Vaughan in 1962, finding him dissatisfied with the apparent stagnation of his life and visual practice and writing more in his journal than ever before. In his efforts to wrest control he adopted the conventions of sexological writing and recalibrated the type of the artist as he who satisfies only himself.

### **i. Search and Struggle**

In the midst of his disillusionment with literature and with the intellectual circles in which he had been moving, Vaughan resolved that he must have his 'superiority acknowledged' by more conventional means and imagined being transferred into the 'officer class' and fitting into 'something ready made, a scale model success' (28.06.42; J11, pp.18-9). Even if his proclaimed need to be 'someone important', as befits his 'birth and education', seems like a brazenly careerist about-turn (p.18), it becomes clear that Vaughan is simply playing with the idea of an extreme reaction to his lack of a fulfilling creative outlet: 'All my life I have longed for celebrity, notoriety, public esteem. If I felt capable of becoming an artist, things would be different [...] I no longer believe I am capable of becoming an artist.' (p.20) What this performance reveals, however, is that Vaughan needed a 'scale model success' to follow, or more precisely a model of creative success he could look to and learn from. Graham Sutherland, officially a war artist at Kenneth Clarke's behest, would be the first to offer both this model and mentorship. We find a first tentative mention of Sutherland where a journal entry ends with a single, stand-alone statement: 'From Sutherland I have got the new idea that landscape need not be looked at scenically' (30.04.42; J10, pp.4-5). Vaughan had already returned to visual practice and produced 'escapist extravaganzas, of very doubtful worth' (15.01.42; J8, p.29). By spring of 1942 the influence of Sutherland on his own work was very apparent; sketches like that of an uprooted tree are redolent of Sutherland's natural forms with their inky trails and spiral forms.<sup>1</sup> Most unusually, an entire page

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<sup>1</sup> Untitled ink sketch (catalogued by Tate as 1942), held at Tate Archive, London, catalogue ref: TGA9013/1/39



following a May journal entry is devoted to an ink sketch that, with its heavy shading and intersecting lines, bears Sutherland's influence (02.05.42; J10, p.11).

Sutherland's practice had a specific appeal for Vaughan. Away from the inward-looking intellectual circles of which he'd grown increasingly frustrated, Vaughan found an artist living and working in communion with the organic reality of nature. Sutherland found his subjects by being receptive to the natural world, 'the element of the accident and the accidental encounter' being of paramount importance.<sup>2</sup> From the mid-1930s onwards he had been searching for material on long walks with no preconceived ideas.<sup>3</sup> John Piper concludes his 1942 book *British Romantic Artists* with his thoughts on contemporary romantics Frances Hodgkins, Paul Nash, and, finally, Sutherland, clarifying that the latter 'paints the elements, and the more elemental natural forms [...] But these are the occasions rather than the subjects for his pictures. He is the most subjective of the younger painters'.<sup>4</sup> Sutherland's emphasis on being receptive to one's surroundings already appealed to Vaughan, himself a seasoned observer; soon the value of the spontaneous, of the encounter rendered through the intense subjectivity of the artist, would grow to be the root of Vaughan's philosophy on art and the artist. By 1943 Sutherland was also mentoring John Craxton, ten years Vaughan's junior, influencing a new generation of aspiring artists. The beginning of this year found Vaughan in a productive vein: 'I have done some good work, and for the first time some success has come my way.' (2[?].02.43; J13, p.17)<sup>5</sup> Quickly brushing aside the financial gains from recent commissions, he continues:

Graham S. More than for his fame he is to me of value as someone who has not failed. Who has my best qualities without the dross. But I know really there is no common ground, though in his presence I feel this less than with any other.

Although trips to see Sutherland had been the catalyst for renewed vigour in his visual practice and would continue to offer enriching company even in periods of despondency<sup>6</sup>, it was clear to Vaughan that he would have to find his own path to becoming an artist.

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<sup>2</sup> Noel Barber, *Conversations with Painters* (London: Collins, 1964), p.44

<sup>3</sup> Ronald Alley, *Graham Sutherland* (London: the Tate Gallery, 1982), p.12

<sup>4</sup> John Piper, *British Romantic Artists* (London: William Collins, 1942), p.47

<sup>5</sup> Vaughan's handwriting makes it difficult to ascertain if this date is 'Feb. 25' or 'Feb. 28'.

<sup>6</sup> Having closed the previous entry on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1943 with, 'I shall not much mind if I do not go to Graham tomorrow', Vaughan writes two days later: 'I enjoyed the day with Graham more splendidly than ever, feeling sure of their [Sutherland and his wife] welcome and the genuineness of their liking for me.' (18.06.43; J16, p.8)

In a short entry on his need to find an ‘anchor’ or ‘centre’ for himself, Vaughan laments, ‘I paint ~~from~~ in a certain desperation and defiance, a desire to prove myself to myself. Not naturally from an exuberance of living. This is all wrong, and cannot lead anywhere’ (01.04.43; J14, p.6). In the Spring of 1943 he found the credo for a new way of living in *The Fear of Freedom* (1941) by social scientist and psychoanalyst Erich Fromm, a book described by its author as concentrating on the problem of ‘the meaning of freedom for modern man’<sup>7</sup>. Objecting to the social and political consensus of the period, and likely feeling afflicted by the ‘moral aloneness’ diagnosed by Fromm<sup>8</sup>, Vaughan was a captive audience for any treatise on the emergence of a new ‘modern man’ in whose image the world could be remade.<sup>9</sup> Under the heading ‘Re. Erich Fromm: Fear of Freedom’, Vaughan declares in somewhat mangled grammar the importance Fromm will have to him by beginning, ‘This book promises to be one of those few after reading which my outlook will be fundamentally different. Only one or two books have had this effect. Spengler and Proust particularly.’ (11.05.43; J14, p.34) In his next entry, which opens volume fifteen of the journal, he truly engages with the text and its effect on him, beginning under the same heading: ‘Much light has been thrown on my own failures and the living of those around me by this book. The extent to which I am living a pseudo life had not before been realized.’ (14.05.43; J15, p.1) Here Vaughan is likely referencing Fromm’s thoughts on social role-playing and the ‘pseudo self’ that replaces the ‘original self’ under certain pressures – and the ‘intense state of insecurity’ that accompanies such a substitution.<sup>10</sup> While such concerns spoke to Vaughan’s established outsiderdom, they hit hardest on the subject of aesthetic taste and the creative life. He considers that many of what he felt to be his own ideas and beliefs are in fact just imitations: ‘Imitation Beachcroft<sup>11</sup> in all matters of litterature [sic] and contemporary culture generally. Imitation [Clive] Bell in matters of modern Art.’ This played on an insecurity previously made apparent when Vaughan had denounced his paintings as ‘imitative and self-indulgent’ (02.07.42; J11, p.29).

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<sup>7</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Fear of Freedom* (London: Routledge, 1997), p.ix

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p.15

<sup>9</sup> Judging from a list of titles written on the inside back cover of journal volume three, Vaughan is likely to have read Carl Jung’s *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, a work that conceptualized a ‘newly formed human being’ who now ‘stands upon a peak’ with the whole of humanity below him and the future ahead – a conceptualization likely to flatter any reader identifying with this modern man’s qualities of solitariness and sensitivity; C. J. Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, trans. W. S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1966), pp.226-7

<sup>10</sup> Fromm, pp.177-8

<sup>11</sup> This refers, perhaps, to T. O. Beachcroft, a writer and critic of short fiction who corresponded with Eliot.

What cure could Fromm prescribe? He decrees that man must 'unite himself with the world in the spontaneity of love and productive work or else to seek a kind of security by such ties with the world as destroy his freedom and the integrity of his individual self'.<sup>12</sup> In the final part of his book, he elaborates on the importance of 'spontaneity', the only approach to life that will conquer 'aloneness'; love is 'the foremost component of such spontaneity', with work 'as creation' being the other.<sup>13</sup> Extolling the intuitive and the impulsive, Fromm attacks contemporary culture's focus on the success of an activity as opposed to the enjoyment of process.<sup>14</sup> While Fromm's ideas certainly spoke to a social and political protest that Vaughan as an outsider was already sympathetic to, his ideas were to have the greatest influence on Vaughan's philosophy of creativity and his construction of the type of the artist: the importance of spontaneity and of creation being impulsive not imitative; the need to always retain individual integrity; and the rejection of conventional notions of success in favour of a focus on process. Throughout 1943 his journal revisited Fromm both explicitly and by allusion to his more quotable phrases; in such instances his journal-writing demonstrated the incorporation of this philosophy into his own and its application in his life. A conversation with Bill on the subject of love results in Vaughan quoting seven lines of Fromm on the subject, even if the author's instruction to 'act spontaneously in order to achieve spontaneous action' proves troublingly circular (06.06.43; J16, p.2). Fromm's influence leads Vaughan to read Karl Mannheim's *Diagnosis of our Time* (1943) and record his findings on how the individual lives and works in a 'shapeless society' in a series of statements for consideration (24.07.43; J16, p.41). It would seem that the influence of Fromm's thought on Vaughan proved evident in the paintings of monumental, universalizing figures he produced years later; the front cover images chosen for the first editions of Fromm's posthumous volumes *The Art of Being* (1993) and *The Art of Listening* (1994) were, respectively, Vaughan's pictures *Lazarus IV* (1959) and *Green Bathers* (1952).

The opening four entries of journal volume fifteen, all dated within one week in Spring 1943, form a narrative crucial to the translation of Fromm's lessons into a model of how to live and create. The first of these is the aforementioned entry on *Fear of Freedom*, dated 14<sup>th</sup> May, in which Vaughan questions his own creative development thus far and proceeds to explore seven points from the text in short paragraphs labelled with roman numerals (pp.1-5). The second, dated 15<sup>th</sup> May, is

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<sup>12</sup> Fromm, p.18

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.225

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.226

primarily an erotic piece on Vaughan's desire to masturbate outdoors, the erotic impulse in art, and a candid admission of the appeal of autoeroticism. On 16<sup>th</sup> May, under the heading 'ART', he puts forward a theory on the impulses driving artistic creation. In the final entry, dated 20<sup>th</sup> May, Vaughan writes on happiness and the choices one faces in pursuit of it.

The entry dated 15<sup>th</sup> May begins, 'Grovelly. Here and now it could be done, quickly and done with a sudden fire' (p.6). Vaughan aims for and achieves a startling immediacy here, waiting to reveal that he is writing from 'the dry and whispering moorland' and enjoying his agony over whether to masturbate in this wilderness. His language is luscious and extravagant, the trees full of sap and his penis a 'stalk' filling and hardening, 'whispering with frustrated longing for relief' as if in communion with his environment. The second paragraph begins, 'Wait a moment and divert the energy through pen to paper. Look around at all these twisting moss encased prostrate forms.' This is an instruction in the present tense, written not only to feed the excitement of the present moment but to advise any future reader on how to recreate its scene of sensual excitation. 'Plan imaginary ritual which will wrench the ultimate ecstatic pleasure from the dead roots', he continues, but the scene turns with the following admission: 'The mind grows tired [...] Dries up the soul, all hope, all expectation, all promise that this time might see a way out.' (pp.6-7) A conflict is now established between excitation and exhaustion, preparing him for the denial of a resolution or, more appropriately, a climax. After a detour to describe the boy on a bicycle who had first aroused him that day, Vaughan returns to a sensuous prose style to detail his arousal by the landscape and his impulse to record it by 'not thinking, letting my mind level itself slowly over the paper' (p.8). He stresses that he could have satisfied himself by now, but that withholding this desire for climax is better:

I intend to leave the excitement + restlessness in me because it seems to me to betoken a latent store of energy which may find some other outlet. I get also a faint sense of power from having resisted the temptation, but this very quickly turns into masochistic pleasure at frustrating the body which increases the restless excitement [...]

He toys with releasing 'the tension' that is building, but knows that the energy he has built through his arousal by his surroundings will dissipate (p.9). Yorke remarks of Vaughan's wartime attitude to masturbation that it 'paralleled in its rhythm of tension and resolution what he believed to be happening in his paintings'<sup>15</sup>, and here we find a conflict being cultivated between those two states; the role of writing is

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<sup>15</sup> Yorke, p.106

crucial to this rhythm, acknowledged by Vaughan as simultaneously alleviating and feeding his desires. Having boasted of his ability to hold himself at 'the edge of orgasm', he reflects on the role of writing in his state by admitting, 'I can definitely say I feel saner and quieter than when I started to write this, an hour or so ago' (p.11). After a line break he returns to the familiarity of the past tense in describing his walk out of some woodland in search of a bus stop. His description of a hilly countryside crossed by networks of roots, roads, and railways is the creative product of his continued arousal by his surroundings. Recalling a scene amongst some elderly bystanders, he remarks how disheartened he is to see in such a 'sap filled summer' the spectacle of the 'lustreless' who experience only 'substitute living and feeling' (p.12), a 'pseudo life' from which he has escaped by following his impulses. He closes this entry by considering his urge for pleasure and the necessity of a counteractive pain against which to struggle; the conclusion reached is that '[t]he sensation of pain is infinite [*sic*] more intense than any pleasure', thus helping to transform the erotic impulse into a process that stores productive energy (p.13).

The following entry, dated the very next day, contains a confident declaration on art in terms of the creative drive. 'Art springs from two distinct psychological urges, and satisfies two psychological needs', he asserts (p.14). 'It can be the the [*sic*] positive expression of inspired revelation, the statement of a solution, an affirmation'; this position is accompanied by examples to suggest such expression can be 'individual and conscious' or 'unconscious and anonymous' in nature. 'On the other hand', he counters:

it can be a means of self realization. A statement of the problem, and a working out of the problem symbolically in terms of the medium. This is a transformation of a state of tension in life into terms of Art, thus easing a psychological complex. Such Art occurs only in a disorganised society, post Renaissance. The form of all such art is dialectic. Originally only the solution was expressed in symbols, the paradox remaining hidden and implied. Latterly the actual processes of the working out came to be considered worth expressing. The so called 'unfinished' techniques in painting. Cezanne was a prime example of this. Such art is more popular and better understood today because the spirit better understands the struggle of search than the revelation of discovery. To this category I myself belong. It accounts for the immense output of mediocre work.

Despite sounding a self-deprecating note, Vaughan in this passage places himself in the enlightened company of those who find value not in results but in process; he clarifies this as an approach grounded in '[h]unger and not affirmation'. He rarefies this company still by stressing the need for 'sensitivity to the quality of the material' to be worked with before 'one[']s problem can be translated into terms of that

material'; accordingly, he dismisses Rilke's suggestion that his methods of poetic transformation could be a 'solution' available to anyone (citing on the same page the 1923 cycle *Sonnets to Orpheus*) on account of the skill and perceptiveness required. Meanwhile, Vaughan's reference to an 'unfinished' technique in painting seems to incorporate the lessons of Sutherland's practice and his ambiguous forms. In the publication accompanying the 2011-12 exhibition *Graham Sutherland: an Unfinished World*, George Shaw writes: 'He's not interested in things, certainly not in things as they are, but perhaps in what they once were and will be, of what they could be. Nothing in his landscape answers anything. [...] There is nothing finished in Sutherland's world.'<sup>16</sup> Vaughan's emerging practice is similarly concerned with potential energies and a denial of resolution so as to prolong the creative moment. It is appropriate that such thoughts should follow an entry addressing the sexual, and more specifically autoerotic, iteration of this practice; for Vaughan the erotic impulse, the key to spontaneous action, leads the way.

The fourth entry in volume fifteen, dated 20<sup>th</sup> May, returns from theoretical territory to reflect on Vaughan's own unhappiness – and particularly on the contrast between his current state and the happiness that can be achieved easily through complacency. He begins by relating the solution found by Raymond Henderson, a man with whom he maintains a correspondence (p.15). Raymond has found happiness after the destruction of his old life in the Blitz by achieving a military rank, something Vaughan suggests was hypocritical and easy ('He who hated war and everything to do with war.'). He changes the subject to lament the waning novelty of his journal-writing task, 'the task of turning my failure into a substitute success by analysing and understanding the nature of my failure' (p.17). Whereas before his sense of failure was mired in deep feelings of inadequacy, here Vaughan reclaims failure as a rejection of success in all of its guises, even when it is only a delusion or 'substitute'. He offers a self-analysis that seeks to maintain his conflicted, and therefore creative, state and underline the impossibility of imminent resolution: 'I grow old but I do not grow up. [...] I can analyse [*sic*] and tabulate and classify most of my weaknesses but am no nearer overcoming them.' The final two pages of this entry address his anxiety about and negativity towards a ten-day period of leave that he is unsure how to spend (pp.18-9). This emerges as a statement on how having high expectations can be crippling, returning implicitly to the contrast between his situation and Raymond's easy solution.

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<sup>16</sup> George Shaw, 'Graham Sutherland: an Unfinished World, Works on Paper 1935-1976', in *Graham Sutherland: an Unfinished World* (Oxford: Modern Art Oxford, 2011), pp.7-20; p.9

Thus ends a narrative that reworks Vaughan's admissions of failure into a state of productive struggle. The whole narrative of these opening four journal entries establishes (i) Vaughan's realization that he has been living an imitative, 'pseudo life'; (ii) the opportunities for spontaneity in following the erotic impulse, and how the self-imposition of sexual pain can provide a productive counterpoint to pleasure; (iii) a statement on art that posits certain binaries and locates artistic creation as a desire for either 'revelation' or 'self realization' – but prizes the less-miraculous latter as a working through of problems and the 'unfinished' technique; (iv) a renewed conviction as to how his own unhappiness and situation far from resolution contrasts with what is implied to be the easy route to happiness. A few days later Vaughan makes an uncharacteristic attempt to record the results of recent creative activity: 'At the moment I am making 6 public appearances in different categories and at different places. Pictures in 2 galleries, an article, a book jacket, and 2 drawings in periodicals.' (23.05.43; J15, p.21) Writing this record serves a double function, allowing Vaughan to remind himself of progress towards some exposure as an artist whilst downplaying the meaning that such achievements have to him: 'The value of this newly achieved 'success' is simply that it helps to convince me of my existence.' He casts a disapproving eye back over 'years of dilettantion [sic], piano playing, painting, writing, Ballet, reading', and recalls how the slow progress of patient practice at each was 'insufferable', so keen was he then for 'quick relief, success, effect' (p.22). The realization of how mistaken he was to focus on results at the expense of process adds a postscript to the narrative formed in the first four entries of this volume; now he is able to reassess his own past practice and realize the true value of productive struggle. The journal receives much enthusiastic attention for the remainder of May and into June as Vaughan applies his newfound reclamation of unhappiness and appreciation for struggle to his construction of the creative individual.

Vaughan's reading of Eric Gill's posthumously published *Autobiography* (1940) presented him with an opportunity to critique the limitations of another creative individual in order to demonstrate his own progressive attitudes. He records his initial reactions in a short journal entry that begins rather drolly with an admission that he feels in a rather good mood – an admission written purely to prove that such moods do exist (26.05.43; J15, p.24). 'Gill found a solution in part', he patronizes, elaborating that this was Gill's belief in a family dynamic (although he cannot imagine how a 'mixed homo-heterosexual society' would work). The following entry, however, embarks upon a strident critique. Vaughan opens with a concession to balance by acknowledging Gill as right in identifying the tyranny of

‘work for material increase instead of work as responsible production of goods for use’ (27.05.43; J15, p.25). And yet it is Gill’s conversion to Catholicism that allows Vaughan to hold him up as an example of abandoning productive creative struggle whilst targeting once again the institutions of organized religion. He calls Gill’s conversion the end of his development and opposes ‘salvation’ for limiting one’s vision and ability to progress by imposing parameters. He disagrees with what he perceives to be Gill’s intolerance for ‘openmindedness’ and how Gill ‘had to know, had to be certain’ of everything, drawing an unfavourable comparison with T. E. Lawrence (p.26). Vaughan attacks Gill’s lack of humility at length and considers the solution offered by the church to have been an easy answer (p.28). Worst of all is Gill’s alleged hypocrisy: ‘He professes to despise science and the scientific outlook and yet draws an analogy from scientific cause and effect to justify his own conversion to religion.’ (p.29)<sup>17</sup> After a line break Vaughan quotes twice from Gide; the second quote is Gide’s admission that praying in its fullest religious sense had lost meaning for him, setting up a contrast between the Frenchman and Gill. ‘I think Gide’s unbelief’, Vaughan proffers, ‘is a greater and more profound thing in every way than Gill[']s belief.’ He proceeds to consider whether the love to which Gide alludes runs deeper through its quality of ‘sorrow’, although he is reticent to claim that ‘frustrated love is capable of greater creative powers than freed love.’ He struggles with the conception of love as ‘a potential energy’ to be drawn upon and is unsure whether frustration is in fact harmful, but fights nevertheless against the importance of resolution by claiming that love must be ‘active’.

The entry on Gill and Gide closes with a statement of purpose by Vaughan, one that asserts the need for a holistic approach to his creative life:

Above all I have got to break down the partitions in my mind. To free a passage through from my reading moods to my painting moods, my practice [*sic*] moods and my philosophic moods. Then there may be a chance of integrating myself and making some real progress. At the moment I make some progress in one department and then I go onto another and that progress is completely forgotten. (p.31)

This is significant as an early statement of Vaughan’s belief in the artist’s life and work as an integrated whole – a belief in the complete artist. He acknowledges that he is moving towards such integration in the entry that immediately follows: “These last few days have given me the opportunity to think and read and write for fairly long consecutive periods. And I begin to feel that I am getting to grips with things,

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<sup>17</sup> So compelling is this evidence to Vaughan that he provides the reference to the passage in Gill’s text, ‘p.168’, in parentheses.



that they are taking shape' (28.05.43; J15, p.31) He embarks upon a summary of his progress, crediting his reading of *Fear of Freedom* as the catalyst: 'It started with Fromm who gave me what I accepted as a true reading of the modern situation [...] And particularly my own unhappiness and its causes became clearer.' (pp.31-2) He is likely referencing the journal entry dated 16<sup>th</sup> May when he recalls attempting 'a little extention [*sic*] of the dialectic theory in an Art philosophy of my own' – even if it led him no nearer to 'an absolute Truth' (p.32). Yet he corrects himself by reasoning that such a 'static and absolute truth' would be too closed and easy, returning to round on religion as the only path that promises such a truth through its requirement 'to abandon search and submit to a dogma' (pp.32-3). Whilst championing the ongoing 'search' required of the creative individual, Vaughan also integrates his emotional life into best practice by refashioning his romantic difficulties as a productive struggle. He stresses at the end of this entry the need to maintain 'tension' in his relationship of unrequited love for Bill (p.34). Only two days later, after recalling his satisfaction with a drawing session on a river bank (30.05.43; J15, p.39), his thoughts turn to the hope that Bill has some homosexual inclination that will reveal itself in a declaration of love. 'This hope will always torment me', he laments, as if to perpetuate the state of tension that has resulted in so much satisfying work (p.41). Upset on another occasion at feeling left out by Bill, he writes, 'I can say that the answer to the frustration of love is to sublimate that energy into [a] creative ~~out~~ channel' – even if 'to take up pen and ink' is ultimately 'no solution at all' (02.06.43; J15, p.43). Thus Vaughan's troubled romantic life, so often a source of despair, becomes integrated into a practice of productive struggle.

Vaughan's journal-writing on the creative process was steadily advancing his conceptualization of the artist and the kind of art he should produce. 'Although I do so little painting these days', he admits, 'I feel the time is not without progress as my ideas + approaches to painting are being cleared up.' (03.06.43; J15, p.43) In this statement we find confirmation that Vaughan's visual practice was no longer to be embarked upon without prior consideration through his research and journal-writing. What follows in the same entry is the very first passage fully engaging with art theory in the journal, headed 'HÉLION on PAINTING'. Jean Hélión was an artist 'ready for the trespass' of nature back into a world of painting that had become, in the 1930s, fixated on clean, sleek abstraction as a left-leaning political statement.<sup>18</sup> Over the final five pages of journal volume fifteen, Vaughan quotes enthusiastically from Hélión's writing whilst adding his own commentary. The entry is arranged so

<sup>18</sup> Alexandra Harris, *Romantic Moderns: English Writers, Artists and the Imagination from Virginia Woolf to John Piper* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010), pp.22-5

that certain statements stand alone as their own paragraphs, emphasizing their importance as possible mantras.<sup>19</sup> The passage begins with ruminations on unity and rhythm within painting, covering such technical problems as composition, the relationships between forms on the canvas, and use of colour (p.44). The material Vaughan has excerpted and commented upon evidence his interest in how the 'spaces between forms' – originally modulated and 'complete' in the work of Poussin and full of movement in Delacroix – became in the work of Cézanne compressed into a dense organization of 'fragments' of colour (pp.44-5). Whereas Seurat went further in making every fragmentary form not only part of the whole but 'an individual, finished thing', Cézanne's fragments are 'not separate complete units' but often 'linked by oblique brush strokes' and locked in to a larger organization; it is this resistance to perfectionism, recalling perhaps the much-admired 'unfinished' technique, that Vaughan most appreciates in Cézanne (p.45). While much of this passage is concerned with technical problems and language, it is Hélión's writing on the natural subject and the subjectivity of the artist that proves to be of greatest interest to Vaughan. In a paragraph of material that appears to be quoted from Hélión, we find the focus shift to the approach of the painter to the canvas: 'Form is produced by the relation of outside open space to inside closed space [...] Facing the surface, all internal energies tense, the painter finds a form' (p.46). In Hélión's words, 'Continuity between man and his work is started' (p.47). It was such continuity, the integration of the artist and his work, that Vaughan was striving for.

The quality of 'acceleration' in a picture, defined by Hélión as the way in which a picture keeps offering more to its spectator, is 'the heart of the personality of each man, his identity, his power to live'. Vaughan quotes Hélión at length on this property in the artist that manifests in his art:

It does not come from the strength he needs to keep his body living, but from the surplus of it, what can be transformed into spiritual life. It is the excess of appetite left to man after eating that makes him different from a cow, and the use he makes of it different from a monkey. The desires growing beyond any satisfaction, the dreams beyond any possibilities. This power of acceleration is what makes a man try to add to the world that mysterious object that is a picture.

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<sup>19</sup> It is sometimes unclear what material is quoted from Hélión and what is Vaughan's own; Vaughan does use double quotation marks, but erratically. Nevertheless, material from Hélión appears to be written in continuous prose with Vaughan's material written in notational sentences that offer summaries or conclusions. The text by Hélión from which Vaughan is quoting is 'Poussin, Seurat and Double Rhythms' which originally appeared in *Axis*, no.6, Summer 1936, before being reprinted in *The Painter's Object*, ed. Myfanwy Evans (London: Gerald Howe, 1937).

It is clear what Vaughan valued in this passage: validation of his thoughts on appetite driving the impulse to create (redolent of his thoughts on 'hunger' in the entry dated 16<sup>th</sup> May 43); a thesis on what differentiates 'man' from the animal; and a mystical deference for the creative process. The communion between the artist and his art is addressed by Héliion in the words that Vaughan quotes to close this volume of his journal:

The shape becomes thought. One cannot be parted from the other [...] The painter faces it and sees his complex self in it, as in a multi-dimensioned mirror [...] Identity is reached between substance and thought. To work one is to work the other. The plastic error denounces the ethical error. Painting is a language. (p.48)

What began as an attempt to extract technical lessons from Héliion becomes an entry devoted to the argument for the intense involvement required of the artist to create. Héliion's words recall those of Herbert Read, who is neither named or cited in the wartime journal but whose influence likely filtered through to Vaughan: in the act of translating the mental image into the plastic form, 'the whole being of a man is expressed [...] some mysterious equivalence between thought and action'.<sup>20</sup> This entry continues into the sixteenth volume until Vaughan signs off with a final acknowledgement of the need to create art through the struggle of being an artist: 'Picasso says that what interests him is Cezanne's anxiety, Van Gogh's torment – the drama of the man.' (J16, p.2) Vaughan is citing Picasso's comment in conversation with Christian Zervos, a comment that was presaged with the Spanish painter's declaration that, 'It's not what an artist *does* that counts, but what he *is*.'<sup>21</sup> Once again, Vaughan's emerging ideas on being an artist found an application in his emotional life, and again with Bill. In an entry dated 28<sup>th</sup> June 1943 he rehearses a letter, signing off, '(This to Bill, as it might have or might be written)' (J16, p.16). In this letter he praises such characteristics as 'vitality', 'simplicity', and 'completeness' as opposed to his own 'complexity' and 'fragmentariness', characteristics that would qualify him to produce art with those favourable qualities (p.13). He addresses Bill with an acceptance of their doomed love: 'You filled me with a strange and turbulent excitement which alas, neither you nor I could satisfy.' (p.14) Here Vaughan's newfound appreciation for the creative power of insatiable appetite helps him to reconcile the impossibility of being with Bill, ensuring heartache becomes something productive.

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<sup>20</sup> Herbert Read, *Art Now: an Introduction to the Theory of Modern Painting and Sculpture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1936, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), p.144

<sup>21</sup> Pablo Picasso, quoted by Christian Zervos in 'Conversation avec Picasso' in *Cahiers d'Art*, 1935; quoted in *Picasso on Art: a Selection of Views*, ed. Dore Ashton (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1988), p.11

In an entry dated 1<sup>st</sup> August 1943, Vaughan claims to experience something like an epiphany at the sight of a boy passing by on a bicycle. Writing from the wilderness at Grovely, he had been plunged into a state of productive erotic torment by a similar spectacle, into 'a useless struggle with the demon, so careless woken by the boy[']s eyes ~~pushing~~ as he stood pushing newspaper into the carrier of his bicycle, his long tender legs astraddle the iron frame' (15.05.43; J15, p.7). Now in this August entry this sight reappears to assume its significance as the symbol of Vaughan's search as an artist:

A boy on a bicycle. My feelings are compounded of a sense of the strangeness of the boy, never before seen, a regret at not knowing, regret at the passing without any recognition; amazement at the coincidence that he should pass at that exact particular moment without my having in any degree foreseen it. (J16, p.43)

The boy's mysterious appearance makes Vaughan curious to know 'where he is going, from where he has come' and arouses 'physical curiosity to become more closely acquainted with the actual strain and stress of muscle and flex of limb as he cycles'. He describes '[a] desire to sum everything up – to focus many simultaneous impressions into one impression which shall be the essence of a boy passing on a bicycle'. Whereas he had always harboured a more romantic appreciation for capturing the single stolen moment, here Vaughan expresses his desire to strive for an integrated vision. In mystifying the boy he exaggerates the task, swelling it to the status of near-impossibility; he has developed the 'boy on a bicycle' as a myth that stimulates his impulse to create through its erotic appeal and its promise of a search, both in technical and emotional terms, without end. The three-page entry that begins with this paragraph changes its subject to an introspective, autobiographical issue: Vaughan's inability to place himself in the past of the previous year. He writes, 'I look back and try to remember what it was like at Codford this time last year.' He can 'recollect the attendant circumstances and the details of life then' but 'cannot remember the sensation': 'I cannot relate my feelings, desires, moods, now with what they were then'. There is an interesting progression here, a continuation of that sense of inaccessibility that carries over from the elegiac description of a boy on a bicycle; just as he cannot know the boy, he is also aware that he cannot fully know himself. This entry then turns to a subject that unites problems of visual practice with introspective analysis: the question of what motivates him to paint. Vaughan calls his desire to paint 'compensatory', an activity not aiming to succeed in any specific vision but a process of searching that will satisfy him in itself (p.45). He begins in a state of excitation that sends him 'searching amongst the whole of existing art history and the whole of the possible future art history for that painting

which will satisfy me – not express what I want to express, but satisfy [...]’ (p.46). He sets out here a process that confirms the significance of a symbol such as the boy on a bicycle: he must be excited, almost certainly erotically, before he follows his impulse to search for a suitable means to satisfy the insatiable urge to express. The search must be as open and unrestricted as possible, thus ensuring that he maintains a state of productive struggle.

Vaughan continued to read and respond in his journal to art theory and in doing so explore the technical translation of the artist’s struggle into an appropriate pictorial form. Beginning an undated journal entry headed ‘FRIEDLANDER ON LANDSCAPE’, a response to the writings of Max Friedländer, Vaughan writes the following instruction on its own line as if an epigraph: ‘The Artist is in love ^with^ nature, not, like the dilettante and virtuoso, with art.’<sup>22</sup> (J17, p.1) This emphasis on receptiveness to nature, and by extension sensual awareness, underlines the importance Vaughan was now placing on the excitation required to arouse the creative impulse. This entry draws primarily from Friedländer’s writing on how artists’ approaches to landscape had developed, moving from Albrecht Dürer to the Impressionists and their ‘search to seize the moment’. The entry concludes by considering Samuel Palmer, his spiritual heir Sutherland, and the latter’s return to ‘things’ in nature – although his rocks and plant forms are ‘symbolic rather than naturalistic’, seeking an effect ‘to contain the romantic visual experience’ (pp.1-2). The type of the searching artist had accrued great significance for Vaughan, yet in technical terms it was Cézanne and his architecture of ‘abstract digits of colour’ that offered the most compelling visual representation of the artist’s struggle to express himself (p.1). Following a short entry dated 10<sup>th</sup> August 1943, Vaughan wrote atop a new page, ‘Notes on Painting’ (J17, p.5), and thus began one of the most revealing entries on his attitudes to art. Vaughan’s ‘notes on painting’ begin with a technical emphasis on symmetry and asymmetry in composition but quickly reveal their primary concern to be the relationship between art and the artist, what Picasso had celebrated as ‘the drama of the man’. Vaughan’s focus was now on the struggle to reconcile ‘opposed forces and entities’, and Cézanne’s effort to organize this chaos on the canvas even as his technique bore ‘more and more the scars of battle’.

In earlier journal-writing when he had envied other artists their chance and doubted his own abilities, Vaughan had imagined Cézanne’s life painting outdoors in idyllic terms, a ‘well-ordered’ life of rewarding achievement (10.03.40; J2, p.122).

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<sup>22</sup> It is unclear whether this is a quote from Friedländer or Vaughan’s own conclusion gleaned from his reading.

Now, in his 'notes on painting', he approached Cézanne as one whose turbulent inner life created the struggle in painting that produced such revolutionary work. Commenting that the hard, plastic perfection of classical art fails to engage with 'today's tormented mood', he points to the more recent romantic school of looking to painting for 'the solution of personal problems'. Vaughan imagines Cézanne's search for subject matter in terms that remind us of what appealed to him in Sutherland's practice: 'Cézanne chose in nature always those subjects that symbolised his own inner conflict – the irreconcilable forces in his nature'. These subjects included 'the confusion of rock and overgrown vegetation, the complex pattern of trees and leaves. These are the symbols of the unsolved human situation – these we recognise.' This Cézanne is a less the contented master and more the restless, tortured soul who declared, as Vaughan quotes him from 1896, "at the present time I am still searching for the expression of those confused sensations that we bring with us at birth." (p.6) Vaughan's decision to quote these words holds up Cézanne as the ideal type of the artist, one who was committed to a search that could have no resolution. This is the Cézanne we find in Clive Bell's seminal *Art* (1914), a text that Vaughan read and discussed with friends in his pre-war youth. Bell had employed the metaphor of a ladder (also used in his 1913 preface to *Art*) in order to convey a ceaseless pursuit of the impossible: 'Every picture carried him a little further towards his goal – complete expression [...] His own pictures were for Cézanne nothing but rungs in a ladder at the top of which would be complete expression.'<sup>23</sup> Bell announced, 'Cézanne is a type of the perfect artist'<sup>24</sup>; Bell's friend and fellow critic Roger Fry, in thrall to Ambroise Vollard's account of the artist's singular character and intense focus, concurred in *Vision and Design* (1920) that 'Cézanne realized the type of the artist in its purest, most unmitigated form'.<sup>25</sup>

Vaughan's 'notes on painting' continue by appreciating Henry Moore and the 'conflict' between human and organic structures that gives his work 'tension, vitality'. Having likely taken a short break from writing he resumes this entry on a new page with a tract on 'mankind' that lambasts 'blind belief' in certain ideas of progress before passionately endorsing the 'courage' of Kafka and the 'scepticism' he wielded as 'a sword' (pp.8-9). Vaughan's thoughts on humanity lead back to matters of visual practice as he makes the following suggestion:

Much art seems to me similar to a practice in sympathetic magic. You make little effigies on certain states of mind, certain irreconcilabilities

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<sup>23</sup> Clive Bell, *Art* (New York, NY: Capricorn Books, 1958), p.141

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Roger Fry, *Vision and Design* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961), p.202

and you bring them into harmonious relationship, and it seems that the harmony echoes back into one's spirit. All romantic art is of this dialectical nature. (pp.9-10)

Again taking a mystical view, informed by Fromm, of the creative process as a cure for modern man's ills, he brings his thoughts on art back to the idea of opposing forces as the artist's psychic material. He asserts that 'the key to Cézanne is his tireless struggle to achieve in form that state of harmonious tention [sic] which is the living equilibrium' (p.10). This is the 'balanced art' to which Meyer Schapiro has since referred in his 1959 essay on Cézanne, in which 'opposed qualities are joined in a scrupulously controlled play'.<sup>26</sup> Just as Vaughan had once appreciated the visible frameworks left in Eliot's poetry he now valued the imperfections and strains on the artist's canvas: 'we like to see all the steps. We like the scars and noise of battle, we want to enter into the artist's struggle and be carried along with him towards his triumph.' Crucially, there is no easy triumph within reach; the 'triumph' is taking a direction rather than arriving at a destination. By bringing his thoughts on art round to the need for 'irreconcilabilities' in the artist's state of mind, Vaughan confirms Cézanne as an example of the perfect type of the artist. Seeking to address 'today's tormented mood', Vaughan comes closer through journal-writing to a theory on art and the artist who produces it that justifies his own tormented mood as integral to the true artist's character.

With a theory in place on the necessary struggle of the artist, Vaughan set about making his journal the account of his own search and struggle. Near September's end he writes a nostalgic eulogy for the hut he shared with the now-departed Bill (24.09.43; J17, p.11). He closes this short entry with a bittersweet swipe at the easy life enjoyed by so many: 'Some join churches, some clubs, some marry, some have a circle of acquaintances, some have a party line, all such have drawn the curtains across the window of uncertainty.' He, however, both an outsider belonging to no party and an observer at the very window most would veil, is one of the noble few: 'How brave are the lonely who can go on riding their loneliness into the unknown future like Columbus, a small boat into uncharted seas with a mutinous crew.' The mutinous voices aboard the boat of his loneliness ensure perpetual conflict – the same state of mind that allowed Cézanne to venture forth and become, as he would have read in Bell's *Art*, 'the Christopher Columbus of a new continent of form'<sup>27</sup>. In early October 1943 Vaughan relocated to Eden Camp

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<sup>26</sup> Meyer Schapiro, 'Cézanne', in *Modern Art: 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, Selected Papers* (New York, NY: George Braziller, 1996), pp.39-41; pp.39-40

<sup>27</sup> Bell, p.139

near Malton where he was, in Yorke's words, 'an isolated and unhappy figure [...] driven yet further in upon himself, but at least he had no more excuse for not getting down to painting and thinking seriously about the role and purpose of art'.<sup>28</sup> We cannot know whether Vaughan was any unhappier then than he was before, but his journal-writing does go further in accentuating his intense, generally miserable moods. Throughout October's entries he makes himself a picture of dignified isolation. In a curious display, he even writes of going to church for the first time since school and attempting to pray as if to pay tribute to Gide and demonstrate the lack of answers available to him (11.10.43; J17, pp.13-4). In a long and significant entry, he relates his struggle to find 'satisfaction in the idea of failure' (29.10.43; J17, p.21) before declaring, 'I am I think passing through a crisis at the moment. The crisis may reach back over the last year or so. Or it may be a succession of crises.' (p.22) He has been overworked, 'engrossed in some ideas in painting', so the crisis has nevertheless been stimulating and productive.

This same journal entry is headed 'AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL – AUTO-ANALYTICAL' (p.20), and marks the first use of the latter term as a means of categorizing journal entries.<sup>29</sup> Analysing himself with the techniques and terminology gleaned from reading psychoanalytic works would prove integral to Vaughan's effort to live according to the type of the tormented artist he had been constructing in his journal. Wyndham Lewis had attacked psychoanalysis as part of a broader argument that art should only deal with the external, art being 'the science of the outside of things' while natural science dealt with 'the *inside* of things'<sup>30</sup>, but Vaughan's responses to Cézanne had convinced him of the need to express the inner life. Analysing the symptoms of anxiety brought on by an ill-advised Sunday trip to Aubrey's, he describes a 'strange pain' in his head 'like a seed of madness sown right inside me' (p.22). 'Then later I started to read about psychoanalysis and self analysis', he writes, 'That gave me a clearer idea of the nature of neurosis' (p.23). He now understood neurosis not strictly as a social product of the times, as he had gleaned reading Fromm, but 'as mental disorder quite peculiar to myself and other neurotic sufferers'. While wary of seeing everything he has experienced as a

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<sup>28</sup> Yorke, p.85

<sup>29</sup> This heading and all subsequent headings in journal volume seventeen are written in different ink (dark blue) to the main body of the text (black) and are often squeezed in and around the text; these factors suggest that they were added later. The handwriting itself still matches Vaughan's hand in this period, and from the end date written on the cover of volume seventeen and the start date written on the cover of volume eighteen it is likely that the headings were added shortly after the completion of volume seventeen whilst Vaughan was rereading it.

<sup>30</sup> Wyndham Lewis, *The Art of Being Ruled*, ed. Reed Way Dasenbock (Santa Rosa, CA: Black Sparrow, 1989), pp.349-50



condition ‘susceptible [*sic*] to cure’, he now regarded his efforts to recollect formative childhood experiences as his already practicing psychoanalytic theory and reasons that the journal had always been an exercise in ‘self-analysis’. He explores his ‘need to be liked’ and draws a diagram to illustrate what he believes to be the root of his neurosis:

Compulsion to success.	}	against      Need for affection
Compulsion to prestige.		(p.24)

The term ‘prestige’ becomes a useful shorthand for Vaughan, as when later he regrets his lack of productivity and suspects himself of wasting time ‘prestige dreaming’ (04.12.43; J17, p.37). In the diagram above, he employs it in tandem with ‘success’ to admit a need for recognition by his peers. Commenting upon the drives delineated in the diagram, he concludes, ‘All the symptoms I can think of can be related to those basically opposed trends’, claiming to have found, via a process of analysis, the inner conflict between opposing forces that is necessary in the artist (29.10.43; J17, p.24).

‘This leads me to a reconsideration of my position as an artist’, he writes, at last using this term in reference to himself (pp.24-5). ‘Originally I think I took up art in a desire to succeed’, he continues, confessing that he had tried always to demonstrate good taste (p.25). He explains the benefits of ‘[s]pontaneous painting’, explicable ‘largely for the reasons I have outlined in my conception of dialectical art’, and contrasts the intuitive approach of seeking ‘a reconciliation of opposites’ so as to restore ‘a sense of balance and inner integrity’ with the premeditated activities that he terms ‘positively creative’ (and which cause him ‘a considerable amount of anxiety’). The entry continues with Vaughan considering his own progress, whether he can love another while his neurosis persists, and commenting upon the ‘vicious circle’ he seems to be trapped in (pp.25-6). Having seemed to make such inroads into fully understanding himself in this entry, Vaughan tempers the possibility of resolution by perpetuating another inner conflict when remarking how his homosexuality (or ‘h/s’, as he codifies it here) makes spontaneous expression all the more difficult (p.28). He closes this entry by returning to opposing forces and their presence even in the face of what many would deem success. He describes the sale of ‘the picture of the stone in the city streets at night’ to a ‘Redgrave’<sup>31</sup>; this picture, a

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<sup>31</sup> Given the reference to the theatre, this may be the actor Michael Redgrave. The picture, meanwhile, is likely *Night in the Streets of the City* (1943).

work similar to those that arose from the rubble of the Blitz in ‘the late flowering of mythic modernism’<sup>32</sup>, is a vision of Vaughan’s ‘longing + loving’, yet he claims his feeling of triumph as conflicted as he was both ‘exhilarated and depressed by it’ (pp.29-30). In writing of such conflicts, Vaughan refigures even modest success as another progression in a struggle.

The following five entries reveal an effort by Vaughan to trace the stages of the creative process through the headings he has given them (see footnote 30). This process now begins with the autobiographical and the auto-analytical as he looks to his early years for the development of those struggles that qualify him to be an artist. The first of these entries, given the heading ‘AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL’, reflects on Vaughan’s fear since childhood of other people and of ‘being different’ (04.11.43; J17, p.31). He then extols the benefits of having identified oneself as neurotic: ‘One sees that the trouble lies within and that even if an immediate cure is impossible, the disease is intelligible, reasonable, and endurable.’ (p.32) The next entry, with the heading ‘AUTOANALYTICAL’, reveals how he cannot just ‘like’ people but must either love them somewhat extravagantly or find them boring – again fostering the idea of dealing only in opposing extremes (21.11.43; J17, p.32). He then confesses that ‘gaining the public eye’ with his painting makes it difficult to work without ‘one eye all the time on the effect’, whereas he should be – like Cézanne on his ladder – working from ‘an upward urge to express something within’ (pp.32-3). In an entry dated 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1943, we find two headings: under the first, ‘PHILOSOPHICAL’, is a consideration of the old story of ‘Alfred burning the cakes’ and how even the great must appear fallible in order to be relatable to their audience; under the second, ‘ROMANCE’, is an account of watching wood burn on the fire<sup>33</sup> (pp.33-4). Beneath the heading ‘AESTHETIC’, the next entry assesses his recent paintings: ‘Those come off which happen accidentally. Those that are planned usually fail.’ (29.11.43; J17, p.34) He reflects that he is unconsciously producing compositionally similar pictures whilst thinking ‘of very little ~~the~~ besides the problems of painting’, and discusses the impulsiveness and impatience that maintains insecurity in his practice (pp.34-5). Finally, under the heading ‘LYRIC (Spontaneous expression)’, we find two attempts at writing a paragraph of poetic prose about a black-haired lost love (likely Bill); the first attempt is crossed through

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<sup>32</sup> Lyndsey Stonebridge, *The Writing of Anxiety: Imagining Wartime in Mid-Century British Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p.6. In early 1943 Vaughan had sent a series of similarly styled drawings entitled *The Destruction of the Human City* to John Lehmann at *Penguin New Writing* (Yorke, p.96).

<sup>33</sup> An entry dated shortly afterwards addresses a similar subject, a cooling ‘firebrick’, also under the heading ‘ROMANCE’ (10.12.43; J17, p.50).

while the second is a more rhetorically restrained piece ending with the speaker sat by a fire that cannot warm him or illuminate (02.12.43; J17, p.36). Vaughan had attempted 'automatic writing' before (in a passage with that heading) that began in suspiciously premeditated fashion before gathering momentum in flowing italics with the random images, rhymes and repetitions one would expect from such modernist exercises (24.07.43; J17, pp.39-40). André Breton, champion of automatism as a spontaneous exercise in accessing one's 'true' self, had defined it as 'a device to link inner and outer worlds and reunify the self, a *vase communicant*'.<sup>34</sup> It is fitting that a sequence of entries beginning with an autobiographical and auto-analytical enquiry, and taking a route through the philosophical and the romantic towards the aesthetic, should result in an attempt to express oneself spontaneously in an attempt to achieve, however momentary, a communion and an equilibrium between the two opposed forces of the inner world and the outer world; this is the artist, after his process of self-analysis and search, struggling with his material to produce art.

If Vaughan's journey towards a theory on art and the type of the artist began in the Spring of 1943 with his reading of Fromm, then it found its conclusion in December with his encountering the philosopher Miguel de Unamuno. Opening an entry by alluding to the former through his 'fear of freedom' on leave days (08.12.43; J17, p.38), he considers his difficulties recalling some thoughts he'd been having on painting (his state of mind had been 'neither happy nor unhappy', an uneasy equilibrium between extremes; pp.38-9) before returning some pages later to the subject of spontaneity. He quotes a passage from Unamuno's *The Tragic Sense of Life in Men and Nations* (1912) on memory being 'the basis of individual personality'<sup>35</sup> and comments: 'Those seem to me to be words very near the Truth. I begin to see more clearly now the value of suffering in life [...] Preventing one from thinning out into the shallows of facile success.' (p.45) Nevertheless he concedes that there 'must be balance' and 'the hope and the belief [...] to go on trying'; in these words we find confirmation of Vaughan's commitment to perpetuating an indefinite, productive struggle. The final section of this entry, headed 'AUTOANALYTICAL', traces his desire to be popular and asks 'whether I was really destined to become an artist or whether my 'artistic career' was simply adopted as a compensation for having failed in other fields' (p.47). Although wary of being

<sup>34</sup> André Breton, 'Manifesto of Surrealism' (1924), in *Manifestos of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1972), pp.1-48; p.26

<sup>35</sup> Miguel de Unamuno, *The Tragic Sense of Life in Men and Nations*, trans. Anthony Kerrigan (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), pp.11-12. This passage is from the first part entitled 'The Man of Flesh and Blood' (pp.3-22), a title that would doubtlessly have appealed to Vaughan.

enticed by ‘the recent ‘success’ of artistic activities’, he concludes that he believes he was ‘destined – (or rather inherently equipped) to become something’. Here he demonstrates that in Unamuno he has found philosophical support for the consulting of one’s memories (in effect the ‘auto-analytical’) in order to locate the present movements and motivations of one’s personality. In a later entry, also under the heading ‘AUTOANALYTICAL’, he revisits his need to be recognized (21.12.43; J17, p.53), considers his stealing plasticine from kindergarten ‘the first spontaneous action I can remember’ in an act notable for the implicit desire to create (p.55), and reflects on how painting in his early teens was wrongly concerned with expectations of achievement as opposed to truthful expression. By this point his auto-analysis is balancing its claims between identifying his inherent credentials to be an artist and exhibiting awareness of what needed to change from his previous practice, and therefore his growth into the type of the artist on which he has theorized throughout the year’s journal-writing.

Vaughan now knew that the artist must be engaged in an indefinite search, alive to his impulses and acting spontaneously in order to express the workings of his inner life as an image that brings together the opposing forces in his psychic make-up. The final piece of the puzzle was Unamuno’s dictum on suffering and its value in life and love. Vaughan’s diagnosis of himself as afflicted by neuroses (which he felt to be an incurable condition) gave him a medicalized account of his suffering, but Unamuno provided something more romantic that accounted for his own numerous disappointments in relationships with others. Vaughan begins a new entry, and a new journal volume: ‘To Unamuno, as to Rilke unrequited love is greater than consummated [*sic*] Love.’ (28.12.43; J18, p.1) He quotes a passage from the former on the ‘barriers destiny and the world and its law interpose between lovers’ and how the greater the odds against them, the greater the impulse that draws them together – two opposing forces locked in tension. Unamuno elucidates the impact of ‘not being able to love freely’ and the bitterness that ensues, yet his theoretical lovers in their unhappiness learn a profound sense of pity that is ‘their common misery and their common happiness’ and that gives their love a transcendental power ‘beyond the confines of the world’ (pp.1-2). Vaughan quotes further on the quality of pity in love before quoting the following dictum: “How can we know ourselves unless we suffer.” (p.2) Although Unamuno was very much a Catholic philosopher, his focus on the life of the flesh and his determination to incorporate the physical life into the spiritual gave him the eloquent voice of self-torture to which Vaughan had always listened. He was a philosopher who believed

that 'it is better to live in pain than peacefully cease to be at all'.<sup>36</sup> Vaughan is wary of suffering as something stiflingly stoic and self-denying and attempts a distinction between deciding the bounds of one's own suffering and being imposed upon by ideological institutions (p.3). Yet the key struggle remains that between the inner world and the outer world with its barriers and laws. With his life and journal-writing so dominated by the agonies of romantic frustration, this is a struggle between opposing forces that Vaughan could access in his visual practice. It already had support in the field of psychoanalysis, with Otto Rank in his preface to *Art and Artist* (1932) arguing that 'artistic creativity, and indeed the human creative impulse generally, originate solely in the constructive harmonizing of this fundamental dualism of all life' between 'the individual and the collective, the personal and the social'.<sup>37</sup> Through Sutherland to Cézanne to psychoanalysis Vaughan had developed in his journal a type of the artist and an approach to visual practice; by understanding suffering he had found the opposing forces with which he could wrestle. This entry concludes with two pages of modernist prose, headed 'COLLOQUE SENTIMENTALE' and addressed to 'you', in which the protagonist is interrogated on his activities cruising through 'moonlight gardens' by the narrator (pp.4-5). In clipped dialogue, the narrator asks him whether he is ashamed before telling him, 'The body you held was that of a stranger.' As 1943 drew to a close, Vaughan's erotic fixations and romantic disappointments attained renewed significance as providing him with the indefinite search and productive struggle required for him to live and work as an artist.

## ii. Success

Throughout the remainder of the war, Vaughan's journal-writing incorporated commentaries on his readings of art theory and his conversations with Sutherland and others. Despite the ostensible variety of these entries, they invariably returned to the ideas and principles developed throughout the volumes of 1943. In an entry headed 'Art & Artistic Creation', Vaughan invokes the suffering artist and his inner turmoil by asking why the great artists were always 'at odds with themselves and society, broken on the wheel of their genius, warped, ailing, carved out with wretchedness, their full ripe manhood rotting on them?' (04.03.44; J19, p.26)

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p.49

<sup>37</sup> Rank, p.xxii

Responding to an article on the influence of French post-Impressionist painting in England, he revisits Poussin and Cézanne as painters who constructed ‘a formal logic as symbols of states of mind’ (21.03.44; J19, p.37). Writing on further conversations with Sutherland he arrives at his mentor’s reassurances concerning the value of improvisation as a principle before praising the sadness expressed in David Gascoyne’s poems; here, once again, is an advocacy of spontaneity in practice and a deference for the unhappy artist (18.04.44; J20, pp.12-16). Having turned volume twenty upside-down, he writes from its final page forwards a draft of an ‘INTRODUCTION TO CATALOGUE’ in which he offers an explication of his exhibited pictures<sup>38</sup> that emphasizes his lack of formal training – his learning coming through observation – and that makes a distinction between imitation and (the inevitability of) influence (J20, pp.34-40). Such a rehearsal of his position in the pages of the journal evidences Vaughan’s increasing conviction on matters of art and being an artist. Amidst his writings on art, those entries on Vaughan’s conscientious objection, social awkwardness, and romantic agonies gained a new vitality and authority in the context of his recent development of the artist as a type and his commitment to demonstrating his growth in accordance with that type. He writes confidently on the unhelpfully easy answers he finds in Forster’s 1908 novel *A Room with a View* (04.06.44; J21, p.25); on the voluntary enslavement of the masses (thanks to broadcast media and cinema) signalling humanity’s need to re-learn its own nature (01.09.44; J23, p.7); and on his desire ‘to kneel down ^like Raskolnikov^ and worship everything that is young and gentle and ~~unspoiled~~ forced to suffer’ (07.10.44; J23, p.38). Striving to be a creative force, his positions as an objector, an observer, and an intellectual were bolstered by his credentials as an artist, thus allowing the journal to continue as the account of an exceptional individual’s growth.

With the war ended, Vaughan wrote in the final entry of the twenty-fifth volume on the beauty of young things growing and how man cannot create beauty – for that is the sole preserve of nature – but can only create ‘order or disorder’, recalling his interest in Cézanne’s organizational struggle whilst gesturing to the artist, as a type, and his role in the re-making of the world (28.05.45; J25, p.39). As a letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> September 1945 and sent from Eden Camp to John Minton makes clear, Vaughan continued to believe the artist’s practice to be a struggle to bring all of his ideas and enquiries into a composition on canvas:

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<sup>38</sup> It is not known whether this was for a current exhibition or the imagined occasion of one in the near future.

But how, I ask myself in exasperation, can one reveal all the understanding one thinks one has in painting? [...] painting is so infuriatingly visual [...] How does one translate all one's problems into visual terms?<sup>39</sup>

In the same letter he informs Minton that he is reading Adrian Stokes' *Colour and Form* (1937). This is an odd book, one influenced by psychoanalytic theory and anthropology and written in a knotty prose tied up with terminology. Its appeal to Vaughan is understandable in that it speaks of an idealistic relationship between art and life in which both are improved – all the while setting impossible standards and thus ensuring an indefinite search for a vaguely defined truth: 'Art to-day, I have said, is particularly relevant as providing a certain philosophy of life. As in art, so in life we begin to learn that only the total configuration reveals ultimate values.'<sup>40</sup> Most importantly, in closing his chapter on the distinction between 'carving conception' and 'plastic conception', Stokes states, 'All artistic creation is like the perfect flower that shows by a certain still shape the stress and strain of its roots, the gradual cycle of its nurture.'<sup>41</sup> It is likely that in reading this Vaughan was reminded of the 'scars of battle' that must be apparent if a painting is to communicate the struggle of its conception. Finally demobilized in March 1946 – he writes 'END OF THE ARMY' in the entry dated 30<sup>th</sup> March (J31, p.15) – and equipped with a theory of creating art and being an artist, Vaughan 'set off from Eden Camp to conquer London'<sup>42</sup>. In 1944 he had pasted his first review, by Eric Newton who was then a critic for the *Sunday Times*, into his new press-cuttings book<sup>43</sup>; more would now follow.

The journal, however, would be largely neglected during the years that Vaughan achieved success as an artist living and working in London. The thirty-first volume, itself only thirty-four pages long, contains entries dated from 4<sup>th</sup> March 1946 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 1948 with no entries written between 20<sup>th</sup> May 1946 and 24<sup>th</sup> February 1948. When Vaughan did return to the journal on that date, he offered a dispassionate update: 'The hidden years with Patrick + Johnny. A weak, stunted, tender, slightly pathetic play.' (p.23) He clarifies that in this time he has had 'no affairs of the heart', a telling suggestion that romantic turmoil provided much of the impetus to write (p.24). After another gap of almost six months he states that '[t]he Lehmann line is cut', bemoans his 'chronic immaturity [sic]', and reveals the

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<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Yorke, p.110

<sup>40</sup> Adrian Stokes, *Colour and Form* (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), p.21

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p.48

<sup>42</sup> Yorke, p.197

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p.95

‘increasing complication of solitary gratification’ (14.08.48; pp.25-6). Of the entries that gradually became more frequent in the autumn of 1948 and into the winter months of early 1949, only one (dated 15<sup>th</sup> December 1948) is more than two or three pages long; this entry addresses his lack of confidence in his teaching abilities and closes with a confession that his current malaise stems from ‘the failure of my exhibition to attract much notice or supply the approbation, and sense of being wanted, that I so much need’ – something not experienced by the hypothetical ‘real artist’ (J32, p.11). Here we find a rare glimmer of the journal’s prior intensity of introspection and self-analysis, for this was predominantly a period of great success for Vaughan. His conceptualization of the artist as a type had not wavered, allowing him to vent his frustrations that his housemate John Minton was not living an appropriately principled life. He disapproved of ‘the drunken caterwauling in the kitchen from J and his cronies’ whilst he was ‘trying to read Gide’s *Journal* on a Saturday night’ (13.11.48; J32, p.2); this disapproval provides a context for his later attack on ‘the accepted ~~tende~~ procedure today of segregating one[’]s activity as an artist from one’s life as a man’ (29.12.48; J32, p.13). While the journal saw renewed activity in 1949 and into 1950, the entries of this period were markedly shorter than those written in wartime and their lack of regularity eventually opened gaps of several months at a time. There were only six short entries in 1950, eight in 1951, four in 1952, and two in 1953. A decade later Vaughan would reflect that he was busy ‘experimenting with living’ during the years at Hamilton Terrace when the journal was neglected (28.01.64; J45, p.20). Having developed a theory on art and the life an artist must live in order to produce it, he seemed to have little need for the journal during years in which he applied his theories and enjoyed critical and commercial success.

In a 1949 article entitled ‘Seven Artists Tell why they Paint’, we find the following caption accompanying a photo: ‘Vaughan paints conflicts.’<sup>44</sup> Vaughan himself contributed a brief statement on his practice, describing himself as ‘drawn towards objects of the natural world in which conflict is apparent’, looking for ‘a state of tension which results when two things of different natures are brought together’.<sup>45</sup> He explained further:

A figure in a landscape, the natural world and the human world, a man lighting his cigarette from the butt of another’s – the essential

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<sup>44</sup> ‘Seven Artists Tell why they Paint’, in *Picture Post*, vol.42, no.11, 12<sup>th</sup> March 1949, p.15; exhibited at *Visions and Recollections: Prunella Clough and Keith Vaughan*, Menier Gallery, London, 15<sup>th</sup> April to 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2014.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*



separateness of individuals momentarily united in a single gesture – these to me are situation of conflict. In painting I seek for a reconciliation. I seek a common unit of construction with which, while each individual object retains its essential identity, both can be built anew together in order and harmony.<sup>46</sup>

In the above statement we find him clarifying ideas and principles developed throughout the 1943 volumes of the journal and making them public as an explication of his practice. Whereas some post-war artists such as Frank Auerbach and Leon Kossof carved out careers as painters of urban London, Vaughan pursued a vision of the young male figure unfettered by attachments to contemporary society or politics and gesturing instead to universal struggles for identity and meaning. As he entered the 1950s his work progressed from the linear constructions and ochre/green palette of Neo-Romanticism to embrace the interactions between larger planes of colour. While he also painted scenes of cottages, barns, and ruins, his focus remained the nude male figure; as the decade developed they reposed in shadowy interiors, bathed in pairs or groups, stretched their limbs in abstracted environments, and came to resemble Cézanne's *Male Bathers* (c.1875-80) with their downcast, featureless faces and apparent lack of interpersonal communication. Fellow painter Patrick Heron was quick to recognize the influence of Cézanne and Matisse, claiming Vaughan had revealed himself to have been 'an incipient Cubist from the start'.<sup>47</sup> In the male figure Vaughan found all the material he needed to produce art that searched for an ideal moment of clarity amidst the conflict apparent in its constructions of, and interactions between, bodies. The work needed to bear the marks of the artist's intense subjectivity, and so Vaughan's figures eventually shrugged off their clean lines and illusion of wholeness. In the closing notice of the last ever *Horizon* in 1950, Cyril Connolly declared that 'from now on an artist will be judged only by the resonance of his solitude and the quality of his despair'<sup>48</sup>; in the decade that followed, Vaughan's elegiac figures likely found their audience amongst those who agreed. In typed copy for the introduction to a catalogue, Vaughan confirms the primacy of the artist's subjectivity over the duty of representation:

What matters is truth to the original sensation – not truth to an aspect of nature [...] but truth to one[']s inner sensation, which also is

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Patrick Heron, *The Changing Forms of Art* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955), p.170. Heron's thoughts on Vaughan and his progression were adapted from a talk given by Heron at the I.C.A. on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1951.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Spalding, p.143

part of nature [...] Because ultimately it is always the same subject that an artist paints – his own experience of the world.<sup>49</sup>

In such statements we find further evidence that his practice was being conducted as he had determined it should years prior in his journal.

The 1950s were, according to Edward Lucie-Smith, the decade when Vaughan as an artist ‘was probably at the height of his powers’.<sup>50</sup> And yet it was the transition into the early 1960s – a period in which Vaughan resumed his journal-writing with an unprecedented degree of confessional candour and self-analysis – that saw him produce his most accomplished and challenging work. He painted monumental figures that crackled with a barely-contained energy, whipping his paint into colliding forces of colour and texture. One look at *White Bathers* or *Laocoön Figure* proves that by 1964 Vaughan was now producing the art to which he had aspired for twenty years: art that holds in a brief moment of clarity and balance the irreconcilable forces at work in the triumphs and struggles of the young male body. Beneath a veneer of formal restraint, Vaughan’s major oils from the 1960s tossed with the tumult of the artist’s innermost desires. To his friends and colleagues, such tumult was not immediately apparent; indeed, Vaughan now seemed to be living the comfortable life that he had always wanted. Whereas in his youth he agonized over allegedly being ignored by Lucien Freud in a pub (15.06.43; J16, p.6), now in his middle-age he was dining with his heroes as a peer and receiving the recognition that he always felt was his due. Turning to Vaughan’s journal, however, we find him desperately unhappy with the demands of his personal and professional life. From the late 1950s onwards the journal became a refuge in which he could plot an escape from his long-term partner Ramsay (invariably abbreviated to ‘R’), record his affairs with younger men, vent frustrations with his practice, and investigate his fascination with autoerotic sexuality (centred around his use of an electrical apparatus referred to as his ‘black box’). In 1957 Schapiro wrote:

If the painter cannot celebrate many current values, it may be that these values are not worth celebrating. In the absence of ideal values stimulating to his imagination, the artist must cultivate his own

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<sup>49</sup> Exhibited at *Visions and Recollections: Prunella Clough and Keith Vaughan*, Menier Gallery, London, 15<sup>th</sup> April to 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2014. Vaughan has hand-written at the bottom of the page, ‘Statement made in 1950 on the occasion of a retrospective exhibition at Whitechapel Gallery.’

<sup>50</sup> Lucie-Smith, p.5

garden as the only secure field in the violence and uncertainties of our time.<sup>51</sup>

Notwithstanding a certain sexualized curiosity about the ever-more liberated youth culture of the day – constituted as it was by the fascinating phenomenon of an economically mobilized working class<sup>52</sup> – Vaughan was as indifferent to the values of British society in his middle-age as he had been during the war. The journal became his garden, a secluded place within the already-private world of his home studio. Vaughan's situation from the late 1950s onwards was reminiscent of that described by art historian E. H. Gombrich in introducing his reader to Cézanne: 'a man of independent means and regular habits' who had no commercial impetus to sell pictures but who 'could dedicate his whole life to the solution of the artistic problems he had set himself'. 'Outwardly', as Gombrich writes, 'he lived a life of tranquillity and leisure, but he was constantly engaged in a passionate struggle to achieve in his painting that ideal of artistic perfection after which he strove.'<sup>53</sup>

By the early 1960s Vaughan needed to take control and get back on his own terms. His relationship of convenience with Ramsay at Belsize Park and his communion with the beauty of male youth were under attack from his fears of stagnation. Having been with Ramsay since 1949, Vaughan first crept back to the journal in early 1956 to record his infatuation with Johnny Walsh, a young delinquent with the '[c]aptivating face of a young boxer' whom he met on New Year's Eve (08.01.56; J35, p.21). Walsh dominates his thoughts when the journal picks up again throughout December 1956 with Vaughan unknowingly foreshadowing this youth's future as his muse by claiming his 'symbolic significance' (03.12.56; J36, p.12), considering his feelings for Walsh in the context of his arguments and unhappiness with Ramsay (26.12.56; J36, pp.17-8), and wondering how Walsh's behaviour can oscillate between such extremes (30.12.56; J36, pp.21-2). In the latter entry he continues by considering the 'moral law' found in every human society that posits a conflict between good and evil, his musings on Walsh seeming to reignite his interest in the opposing forces acting upon, and within, the individual (p.22). Their relations persisted and Vaughan, after so many years of success and comfort, clearly relished recording the struggle of his feelings for Walsh ('My love for him would wreck my life') and the opposition between his destructive allure and the security offered by Ramsay (07.06.57; J37, pp.15-6). Roused by

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<sup>51</sup> Meyer Schapiro, 'Recent Abstract Painting', in *Modern Art: 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, Selected Papers*, pp.213-26; p.226

<sup>52</sup> Bill Osgerby, *Youth in Britain since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 'Making Contemporary Britain', 1998), pp.26-7

<sup>53</sup> E. H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art* (London: Phaidon, 1972, 12<sup>th</sup> ed.), p.428

restlessness for love or something resembling it, Vaughan returned to the journal with growing frequency and began to codify accounts of his autoerotic activities whilst musing on attitudes towards masturbation (often codified as 'mf'). There were still significant gaps in his journal-writing (August to October in 1957; January to July in 1958) with the most active periods being trips abroad (Spain in 1958; Iowa and Mexico in 1959). During those months in the Americas he fell first for a young American named Edward and then for a Mexican boy named Raul with whom he maintained a written correspondence; using the passport-sized photographs that accompanied Raul's letters he created a collaged shrine to him on the inside front cover of volume forty two. These trysts heralded a return to the lush romantic writing that characterized much of his wartime journal. Vaughan reflected on the return leg of his American journey, 'I have done more living in the last 3 months than in the previous 10 years' (03.07.59; J42, p.65). In both 1960 and 1961 he was inattentive to the journal until the Spring months, but desires for romance fuelled by animosity towards Ramsay and fantasies of younger men found him writing more frequently and eventually on wider subjects such as his reading and visual practice. The journal also started slowly in 1962 but April ushered in a renaissance of Vaughan's journal-writing. Success had stymied the struggle required for the artist to progress; now Vaughan sought to reinvigorate his life and art by cultivating a productive struggle on his own terms.

### **iii. Sex and Control**

By early 1962 Vaughan was finding life in his home studio beset by problems: a saga of ongoing grievances with his landlord, Francis de Souza, and increasing antagonism between himself and Ramsay. Against this backdrop of domestic discord, he increasingly perceived his achievements as an artist to have been largely facile thus far. In a journal entry despairingly dated 'April 10, 11, or 12', he writes: 'Success, applause, money – on the one hand – on the other suicidal despair & wretchedness. A life with no love, hope, pleasure or purpose. Imprisoned in my own neuroses.' (J43, p.35) In the final entry of the previous volume he had recognized his tendency to ignore the positives and reminded himself that 'during the last 2 weeks in January 1960 I did work which subsequently sold for about £750 [...] yet in my journal I am still complaining of total inability to work – no sense of direction – no urge etc. Am I stark raving mad?' (18.05.61; J42, p.153) He continues, 'One reads

about these things in other artists & thinks how perfectly absurd – I should never be like that – at least I would know if I were painting well (the case of Cezanne for instance).’ Such self-aware rebalancing was rare at this point in Vaughan’s journal. Writing on ‘April 10, 11, or 12’ (because, after all, what difference does it make?) he describes the reprieve offered by writing: ‘Strange – how immediately one starts to write, after the first line or two – one feels better. The pain becomes externalized.’ (p.35) He clarifies that this works ‘only so long as one thinks of one’s self. One’s own pain can be tolerated to an extent. What is intolerable is R’s pain.’ Writing enabled Vaughan to take control of his own pain, even if he struggled to shut out the pain of others. A few days later he explains that much of his time writing has been committed to the latest of his erotic fictions<sup>54</sup>: ‘Some three weeks of persistent erotomania – days spent writing the ‘Corporal’ evening ~~coming~~ combing the West End for possible partners. And as usual every time a contact is made I close up like a limpet.’ (14. 04.62; J43, p.39) Vaughan had been cultivating a private written world of sexual fantasy for some time; a few years prior he bemoaned the obligation to attend a ‘wretched gala dinner’ and protested, ‘Actually there is nothing I want to think about, write about except sex [...] the one condition in which I feel myself, all of a piece, whole, undivided.’ (04. 07.59; J42, p.71) By 1962 life at Belsize Park had become for intolerable for Vaughan, the cruel reality of a sham success, and his only way to take control of his emotional and creative life was thinking and writing about sex.

He began to use the journal to mount a defence of masturbation whilst justifying it as the most appropriate sexual practice available to a homosexual man. A regular reader of the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, he states that, ‘the more I read psychoanalytical litterature [*sic*] the more convinced I become that these people ^are^ on the right scent – the road to real understanding’ (12.05.62; J43, p.45). He continues:

The whole case against pornography + onanism (the 2 go together as Tow<sup>55</sup> rightly points out) is that the physical experience of sex – without a human relationship is invalid. Why. Eating & drinking can be enjoyed for their physical pleasure apart from the nutritional necessity – why not sex [...] for homosexuals it offers a sort of solution – & does not prevent sexual relationships when they are

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<sup>54</sup> These fictions, with titles including ‘The Adolescent’, ‘The Trappists’, and ‘The Importuner’, were not written in the journal but instead as separate manuscripts. Their present whereabouts are unknown.

<sup>55</sup> A contributing author to a text called ‘Does Pornography Matter’ that Vaughan claims to have ‘bought and read the other day’ in the same journal entry. The bibliographical details of this text are unavailable.

offered. But it ~~obvious~~ obviates the constant drive & search for novelty & promiscuousness – essential for homosexuals – since the relationship is anyhow largely narcissistic. (pp.45-6)

This statement recalls an entry made four years prior in which he had denounced sodomy as bestial and often guilt-inducing whilst claiming that ‘really all h/s relationships are primarily narcissistic ones and h/s technique primarily masturbation’ (02.01.58; J38, p.9). In this earlier entry he reasoned, ‘Once this situation is admitted and accepted it is possible to dispense with the second person altogether.’ Even near the beginning of his relationship with Ramsay in the late 1940s, Vaughan had distinguished his long-held sexual preferences from feelings of love for a specific person (love which is like ‘being mothered’) whilst warning of how reliance on the love of one person is dangerous (25.04.49; J32, p.33). For someone who was still likely to ‘close up like a limpet’ when approaching other men, the removal of that second person and all of their thoughts and needs must have seemed like an answer.

Vaughan’s use of the term ‘onanism’ in the entry dated 12<sup>th</sup> May 1962 is interesting in the context of its genealogy leading back to André David Tissot’s hugely influential and bestselling work *L’Onanisme; ou, Dissertation physique sur les maladies produites par la masturbation* (1760). Following what Thomas W. Laqueur calls the ‘primal’ text addressing masturbation, the short tract *Onania* (c.1712) by an anonymous English author hawking a cure for the side-effects of self-love at a steep price<sup>56</sup>, Tissot undertook a comprehensive study of these effects and portrayed ‘the diseases caused by prolonged mental activity and masturbation [...] in much the same light’<sup>57</sup>. Tissot insisted on a medical brief as opposed to a moral duty, detailing physical symptoms such as stomach pains and rheumatism but stressing above all the damage done to the nerves by the practice of masturbation.<sup>58</sup> Havelock Ellis had, in his first volume of *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1899), regarded ‘onanism’ as an especially unhelpful term as it related specifically to ‘coitus interruptus’ and not to the broader field of investigation that he preferred to call ‘autoeroticism’.<sup>59</sup> By using the term ‘onanism’, Vaughan was not only invoking the somewhat euphemistic prestige of a predominantly French term derived from an allusion to the Old Testament’s Onan, but also recalling the tendency for sexual research to focus on the physical and psychic deterioration of those who practice

<sup>56</sup> Thomas W. Laqueur, *Solitary Sex: a Cultural History of Masturbation* (New York, NY: Zone Books, 2004), pp.13-6 & pp.25-9

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p.40

<sup>58</sup> Mosse, p.60

<sup>59</sup> Extract reprinted in Bland and Doan, p.244

masturbation. In the aforementioned entry from 1958 he warns that ‘of course the body, once addicted to these [masturbatory] techniques does not easily respond to the cruder and less refined stimuli of intercourse’; while privileging self-love here, he nevertheless entertains that relations with another can be compromised (02.01.58; J38, p.10). Later that year he asserted that the ‘cooperation of a partner becomes not only unnecessary but undesirable’ in sex, yet commented with some concern, ‘I fear I cannot avoid paying for this in deterioration of physique & mind’ (‘August Bank Holiday’; J39, p.5). In the entry dated 12<sup>th</sup> May 1962, having described his routine of ‘electrogenital stimulation’ accompanied by erotic photographs and manually induced climax, he confesses, ‘And yet – am I fully convinced? It does not have quite the same free satisfaction that sex with another can when it has worked perfectly.’ (p.46) But free from what? Free from guilt, perhaps, or free from the anxiety that one is isolated in their indulgences. Before detailing how Vaughan’s journal came to be dominated from this point onwards by his accounts of and thoughts on masturbation, it is useful to consider Laqueur’s argument as to why masturbation has posed such a threat to the imagination ever since the Enlightenment. Laqueur proposes that ‘the history of masturbation is part of the history of how the morally autonomous modern subject was created and sustained’.<sup>60</sup> He argues that modern culture encourages individualism and imagination but that modern subjects also have to ‘learn to moderate their desires’ and keep them in check, and that therefore ‘[m]asturbation is the sexuality of the self par excellence, the first great psychic battlefield for these struggles’.<sup>61</sup> Stagnating despite his success and trapped in situations with his landlord and his partner seemingly out of his control, Vaughan cultivated his struggle with masturbatory practices as a struggle on his own terms.

Recording his sexual practices in his journal for the purpose of cross-examination gave Vaughan the impression of taking control by grappling with a complex problem. In an entry dated 18<sup>th</sup> October 1962 he details all of his sexual activities of the last two weeks, listing activities for every date from 27<sup>th</sup> September to 13<sup>th</sup> October, under the heading ‘Analysis of anxiety attack’ (J43, p.73). He claims that this anxious state is only now beginning to subside after five days and is therefore eager to track the development of his sexual activities – a development ‘from a normal sex relations with R on return from France to a gradually increasing autoeroticism with long periods of sexual tension’ (p.74). Each time Vaughan was delaying orgasm further and further, sometimes not climaxing at all. He was

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<sup>60</sup> Laqueur, p.21

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

beginning to focus more and more on frustrating himself in order to cultivate a state of tension amidst the ostensible stability and comfort of his success. That an artist should make self-induced sexual frustration the arena for productive struggle should hardly surprise; Egon Schiele, a creator of angular, unforgiving nudes, is quoted as stating, 'I believe that man must suffer from sexual torture as long as he is capable of sexual feeling'<sup>62</sup>. Nevertheless Vaughan was 'anxious to know whether delaying the orgasm has any effect on anxiety attacks' and keen to portray himself as pushing the boundaries of what could be safely endured. As the entry concludes he considers the writing of Freud's associate Ernest Jones on delayed orgasm, or 'coitus interruptus', being a 'sure cause of neurasthenia' and in doing so defers to the works of sexological research that replaced death and madness with guilt and its psychic costs (neurosis, tiredness, anxiety, abjection) as the consequences of solitary sex<sup>63</sup>. The use of the term 'neurasthenia' to describe symptoms resulting from masturbation dates back to Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) and its conclusions gleaned from numerous case studies. Freud had 'consistently maintained that it was easy to show that coitus interruptus and masturbation caused anxiety neurosis and neurasthenia, respectively' and Ernest Jones echoed Freud's certainty regarding matters of 'incomplete sexual satisfaction'.<sup>64</sup> Despite this confidence, as Malcolm Macmillan explains, 'few psychoanalysts since about 1950 have agreed with Freud or Jones'.<sup>65</sup> By this time the idea of neurasthenia was 'a similar failure'.<sup>66</sup> This suggests that Vaughan's readings of Freud and his associates Ernest Jones and Sándor Ferenczi were feeding him outdated and widely discredited material. Vaughan pressed on regardless, pursuing solitary sexual gratification on his own terms whilst turning his written assessments of these practices into a sexological research project of his own.

After a brief few opening lines to a new entry, he writes, '2 Arguments' and proceeds with two numbered paragraphs offering, respectively, arguments against and for the practice of autoeroticism (28.10.62; J43, p.75). In the first he suggests that if a man 'releases his hold' on his values then he is reduced to only enjoying sexual pleasures and ultimately 'ends a voluptuary with the associated mental & physical decay this entails'. In the second he argues for the value of 'sexual pleasure' – which he takes care to define as 'the sense of sexual sensation' through stimulation

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<sup>62</sup> Frank Whitford, *Egon Schiele* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1981), p.119

<sup>63</sup> Laqueur, p.361 & p.372

<sup>64</sup> Malcolm Macmillan, *Freud Evaluated: the Completed Arc* (Cambridge, MA: the MIT Press, 1997), p.198

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p.199



regardless of the presence of an interpersonal relationship – as ‘a full & complete physical pleasure’. ‘It is senseless to deny it’, he continues, ‘& wasteful not to cultivate it to the fullest extent [...] Not only the body but the mind & spirit is revitalized by sexual tension.’ He proceeds to write in favour of electrical stimulation and how it can remove any guilt surrounding ‘self handling’. He acknowledges that he is ‘overloading the argument in favour of the latter, yet unable to accept it convincingly’; having argued for the value in engaging with sexual sensation and pleasure, yet not fully reasoned away his persistent concerns, he provides the context of irresolution that allows his research to continue. He draws this entry to a close by considering the long history of self-pleasure across world cultures from ‘savages’ to the Oneida Community in America. He makes a note to refer to Otto Stoll’s *Das Geschlechtsleben in der Völkerpsychologie* (1908), translated as ‘Sex Life in Ethnic Psychology’, before returning with the following annotation in parentheses: ‘Saw it – largely recapitulates what I had already read’. In such journal entries Vaughan was keen to demonstrate his knowledge and credentials as not just an autoerotic practitioner but a researcher.

In July he had reflected on 1962, his ‘50<sup>th</sup> year’, so far and bemoaned his stifling obligations to both his mother and Ramsay whilst lamenting the difficulty of finding ‘the independence & integrity to live up to my public persona’ (30.07.62; J43, p.57). He presumed that ‘[o]ther successful & celebrated contemporary artists have planned this’, have ‘worked & aimed for it’, and ‘know what to do when it is achieved’ whereas he does not. In his final entry of the year he offers the following assessment: ‘It has been a year of my highest public success & lowest personal degradation [*sic*] – I exaggerate [*sic*] – things are never so clear cut.’ (31.12.62; J43, p.88) Yet Vaughan proceeds to wrest control of the situation by ostensibly flipping this value judgement around to suggest the sham of his public artistic success whilst the real progress is being made in private research. He reflects that his show at Whitechapel was ‘a major success from every point of view’, having only acknowledged it in his journal in an entry dated 29<sup>th</sup> April 1962 once it was over! But of his exhibited work he proffers that, ‘instead of gaining in confidence, self-assurance & drive, my work has become confused [and] vacuous, bogged down in technical trivia, empty of contact.’<sup>67</sup> Of all the critical responses to the show he picks out a comment on its repetitious theme:

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<sup>67</sup> In an entry dated 14<sup>th</sup> September 1976 Vaughan reflected on 1962 as his ‘peak year’ (J62, p.102), an assessment with which Hastings concurs; Gerard Hastings, *Drawing to a Close: the Final Journals of Keith Vaughan* (London: Pagham Press, 2012), pp.206-7

'he says over & over again simply what it feels like to have a body' – D.S.'s perceptive critical remark is about the only one I remember ^perversely as usual^ from the bunch of ~~press-cuttings~~ of generous praise showered on me from all quarters.<sup>68</sup>

Overleaf he writes the heading 'THE YEAR' and lists such achievements as the Whitechapel show and his first television appearance. The fourth item on this list is: 'Discovery that neurasthenia was no longer medically recognised & that prolonged & frequent sexual tension did no organic harm. Consequent perfecting of my electrogenital stimulator & frequent use thereof.' (p.89) As if to establish a contrast between the aspects of his life he has control over and those he does not, the next item is: 'Persistent doubts about what I still have to do in painting.'

Months later in a short and eloquent entry he states, 'The trouble with my work – its confusions, hesitations, compulsive repetitions, inhibited monotony are the troubles with my personality. The one will not change without the other.' (24.03.63; J43, p.105) As Vaughan's confidence in painting waned his journal-writing sought to assert a non-conforming singularity of purpose. He used to believe 'one could discover oneself in the act of painting' but doubts now whether that can be true, suspecting instead that 'painting can only be the expression of what one is – not what one would like to be'. He later becomes interested in 'the dramatic promotion of P. [Patrick] Procktor these last weeks', mostly the work of Whitechapel's curator Bryan Robertson and proceeding '[a]s well timed and geared as though he were a pop singer' (20.05.63; J44, p.21) Vaughan continues this lengthy journal entry by offering an account of an initially innocuous, yet likely passive-aggressive, exchange with Ramsay after dinner concerning the week's plans ('R. creeps to his bed – I creep to my journal'; p.25) and ends, after almost four pages of venting his exasperation with his partner, with him opining, 'But how I would love to be involved with something other than this [...] Some painting problem.' (p.28) Just over a week later he records two important resolutions in his journal. The first concerns his work, buoyed by 'the 48 x 36 canvases of single figures' now 'taking some sort of meaningful shape': 'Best of all is my growing certainty that work must be figurative in principle. The urge to ~~join in~~ enter the contemporary no man's land of abstraction is now past I hope.' (29.05.63; J44, p.30) The problem of the 'abstract-figurative' dichotomy had been raised as early as 1958, when he had described his indecision as resulting in 'apathetic inaction' (14.12.58; J40, p.14). In that same 1958 entry he had continued by postulating that '[o]ne supposes that so little is known about the sex life of other artists simply

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<sup>68</sup> Yorke identifies this reviewer as David Sylvester; p.213

because they did not consider it particularly worth mentioning [...] Yet for me it is all important' (pp.14-5). This is significant, for the entry dated 29<sup>th</sup> May 1963 also progresses from addressing the abstract-figurative problem to an admission of the importance of candour on all matters of sexual practice and Vaughan's second resolution:

If my claim to fame rests on anything I suppose it must be on the persistent + thorough exploration of the possibilities of auto-eroticism; what one man can do alone with himself. My painting is nothing but a visual image of this state of personal isolation – a perpetual celebration of the fact of possessing a body (D.S. spotted this in his review of the Whitechapel retrospective)

While Vaughan concedes that the realization of having a body is a 'discovery of early adolescence' that most people simply get over, he admits here that this is still his primary interest as an artist. If his painting is to be the expression of who he is – whilst resisting the competitive pressures of the contemporary scene that has catapulted Procktor towards stardom – then he will have to pursue his autoerotic research to reach the level of full disclosure that he claims is denied to us by other artists.

In 1959 he had enjoyed the idea that by writing about sex so openly he could 'commit an offence against the moral code of society – and render my books unpublishable' (05.07.59; J42, p.72). In this entry he questioned why 'all that deviates from heterosexual intercourse' is taboo and asserts that 'sexual morality is meaningless'. He also revelled in calling himself a 'pervert' and in doing so reclaimed the term that had, in the 1940s and 50s, attempted to medicalize certain behavioural problems in order to aid the categorization of homosexuals<sup>69</sup>. Vaughan harked back instead to the more mercurial representation offered by Freud, who posited the 'highly gifted individual' – especially 'one with an artistic disposition' – as likely to exhibit a mixture of 'efficiency, perversion and neurosis'<sup>70</sup>. Later Freudian Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel has perpetuated this representation, remarking on 'the pervert's obvious affinities for art and beauty' and stating that 'the pervert is often an aesthete'.<sup>71</sup> By 1963 Vaughan no longer referred to himself as a pervert but instead wrote his manifesto on autoeroticism under the heading, 'On SEX. The Onanist.' (23.09.63; J44, p.47) By reviving this term in implicit reference to himself, he daringly associated his autoerotic practices with a term marginalized by Ellis to invoke once again a tradition of pseudoscientific scaremongering. The

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<sup>69</sup> Marshall, p.151

<sup>70</sup> Freud, p.238

<sup>71</sup> Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel, *Creativity and Perversion* (London: Free Association Books, 1998), p.92

whole entry is written in level, evenly-spaced text with only a few minor corrections. There is no use of 'I' as a first-person pronoun and the entry is written in a detached, authoritative prose redolent of an instructional text. Vaughan begins: 'He ~~erects~~ assembles in his mind an image of a recent sexual experience & examines it to see if he reacts sexually to the idea of sex.' He clarifies, 'The image does not involve another person or any sexually exciting object but is simply a reincarnate memory of the sensual experience itself.' This evidences a development in Vaughan's thinking as to which images or ideas bring about sexual arousal; whereas he had previously described so many of his own early romantic attachments as 'a fantasy relationship with a symbolic image' (25.12.62; J43, pp.84-5), now the image is no longer just symbolic as in anonymous but symbolic as an image of the sensation itself. 'The sexual experience', his manifesto continues, 'isolated as a subjective sensual pleasure, unalloyed by personal relationships with another can best be achieved by electrical stimulation.' (23.09.63; p.47) He argues that even conventional masturbation personalizes the hand as 'I' and objectifies the penis whilst praising his black box as it cannot be 'libidinized'. 'This is pure sex', he enthuses, 'If the eyes are closed ~~sexual~~ erotic images will form suitable to accompany the sexual sensations. These will usually have a masochistic or sadistic temper owing to the frustrating quality of immobile [*sic*] sexual excitement.' (pp.47-8) He revisits the subject of prolonging the experience and delaying orgasm, asserting that 'a state of tension & unfulfillment' is 'in itself erotically satisfying' (p.49). His black box is 'pure' and effective because it offers the greatest control over the level of sensation and instant 'cessation' if need be (p.50). He bolsters the authority of his scientific register by providing a full description of male hormone production and semen transit in the male organ before closing this entry by embarking upon an (appropriately) unfinished instructional passage entitled 'Karezza Training: The electro-stimulant method'.

Two days after his manifesto on 'the onanist', Vaughan confirms that his preferred working practice combines painting, sexual fantasizing, and Karezza<sup>72</sup>. This entry marks the true beginning of Vaughan's records of this practice in his journal; in them he uses the vocabulary developed throughout earlier entries (and clarified in his manifesto) to take ownership of his intertwined visual work and autoerotic life. He records the time as 10am, and relays that after driving to the heath and writing erotica the day before he has now put a 40 x 36 canvas on the

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<sup>72</sup> The term 'Karezza' pertains to *coitus interruptus* and was coined by the obstetrician and activist Alice B. Stockham, who researched the practices of the Oneida Community, in *Karezza: Ethics of Marriage* (1896).

easel and will 'try and start' (25.09.63; J44, p.52). Although he expresses concern regarding his reclusiveness, he presses on and at 5pm confirms that he has started on the canvas and that work has gone well, has been enjoyable, and has been 'interspersed with periods of Karezza' (p.53). In this respect Vaughan had something in common with Salvador Dalí, who declared, 'it often happened that I would put my brush down so as to take my cock in the same hand and go from one pleasure to the other living through the same ecstasy'<sup>73</sup>. Having wondered at 11pm about his depression and from whom he could possibly seek advice, the lustre of depressive anxiety having dissipated long ago now (p.53), Vaughan returns to safer ground by reflecting on the history of his 'daytime masturbation' as 'a comparatively recent, post war activity'<sup>74</sup> (p.55). He recalls 'an early electrical apparatus' which he destroyed in 'guilt & disgust' but describes buying a new one in the 1950s that he has been perfecting ever since and that he now uses 'without guilt & certainly with ecstatic pleasure'. And yet he writes of his hopes that Karezza experiments are harmless, reassuring himself that at least they seemed to be for the Oneida Community, and in doing so reveals the persistence of underlying anxieties (p.58). Such anxieties are most apparent in entries such as that which, the following month, contains a full-page chart detailing all of Vaughan's sexual activities from 27<sup>th</sup> September to 16<sup>th</sup> October (11.10.63; J44, p.74). This chart is comprised of nine columns of information: DATE & TIME (21 instances over this period); NATURE OF IMPULSE (e.g. 'Curiosity', 'Sexual urge', 'Test control'); NATURE OF TREATMENT (Mostly 'Karezza', but also there's 'Resisted' which results in a 'persistent erection' and 'Tension' that leads to 'Commenced work'); DURATION (in minutes); EFFECT OF TREATMENT (often 'Sexual pleasure', clarifying in which instances he ejaculates); DURATION; RESULTING CONDITION (whether 'Tension', 'Satisfaction' (mostly) or other); DURATION; SUBSEQUENT ACTION TAKEN (such as 'Sleep' or 'normal activity'). The conclusion that Vaughan ascertains is 'clear from the chart on the opposite page' is that 'sexual activities such as I practice do not induce depression' (p.73). In fact, 'they seem to relieve it' or at the least probably 'have nothing to do with it.'

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<sup>73</sup> Salvador Dalí, *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali, as told to André Parinaud*, trans. Harold J. Salemson (London: W. H. Allen, 1976), p.89

<sup>74</sup> He had written of the 'new habit' of masturbating during work back in 1948 (17.10.48; J31, p.29), yet there is some evidence from the entry dated 24<sup>th</sup> March 1944 that 'impulsive M' was more involved in wartime practice than he acknowledged (J20, pp.1-2). Nevertheless, it remained very much codified in contrast to the journal material in the 1950s/60s when it became of supreme theoretical importance.

In the entry dated 25<sup>th</sup> September Vaughan asks what will be made of his journal by any potential future readers. 'What will the final verdict be, On me – on what I am', he wonders, 'By people who come after + see what I did + read what I write in this journal.' (p.56). While conceding it is possible that no-one ever will, he admits that he writes 'vaguely for posterity – from a sense that I would like the truth, so far as I can discover it, know[n]'. For Vaughan writing about sex is true honesty, the greatest expression of unconditional candour. The following day he suggests that he wishes the journal – and, he implies, its somewhat scandalous content – to be considered as a posthumous achievement: 'The point about this journal is that it reveals sides of my nature & behaviour which I would not care to have known while I was still living.' (26.09.63; J44, p.63) He suggests that his sexological research into autoeroticism is written in his journal to not only provide a record enabling him to chart his own activities and reactions but also provide a record for any future reader on the efficacy of autoerotic practice: 'One knows absolutely nothing of the secret practises [*sic*] or masturbatory habits of past writers of journals. Gide comes closest.' He considers that they may simply be repetitive subjects unworthy of attention, but reasons that 'in conjunction with what is known and revealed, they may help to complete the portrait'. Again Vaughan figures his candour on controversial matters as potentially his greatest creative achievement; in this respect, autoeroticism is not wasteful or indulgent but productive and therefore inextricably linked to creative practice. 'Painting today is self expression', he declares in the same entry, arguing that the artist who fails is the artist who fails to 'satisfy himself' (p.61). Self-interest is honesty in action and goes beyond the artist as any man 'must set his own aims & standards & attempt to fulfil them'. Here we find Vaughan's justification for pursuing solitary sex and for tapping into the creative current of autoeroticism, and not contemporary mores, for inspiration; as he only has himself to rely on, he also maintains complete control. Towards the end of 1963, after a two-week period of high anxiety and helplessness in pressurized personal matters (or 'aggressive situations'; 27.10.63; J44, p.87) that has impacted on the fragile world of his visual practice, he reasserts his self-reliance: 'One might say that I follow the pleasure principle. Do nothing I do not fancy unless driven. Same thing applies to my work.' (13.11.63; J44, p.94) Again he confirms his preference for 'the spontaneous indulgence of direct painting' before re-iterating that '[p]ursuit of the pleasure principle leads inevitably to masturbation'. In such instances journal-writing provides the means by which he can justify autoeroticism as inextricably linked to his practice and thus demonstrate control over his sexual and creative life.

In the autumn of 1963, having written his manifesto on the practices of the onanist and equipped himself with a working method and vocabulary for reporting them in his journal, Vaughan seems to have developed a relationship between his sexual attraction to other men and his autoerotic/visual practice that alleviated the inevitable dejection arising from the former by leading to productivity in the latter. In the entry dated 15<sup>th</sup> October he recalls seeing in the Golden Lion pub ‘one of those faces – the eternal loved one’ (J44, p.75). Out on the street, and inspired by longing for a vision of young male beauty, he apparently felt ‘a great heartfilling love for everyone’ (p.76). However he closes this entry by considering his responsibilities towards Johnny Walsh and suggests their mutual reliance on one another. The next day he is resolutely in control of his own desires, undergoing four Karezza sessions under strict controls with successful use of photographs as visual stimulants (16.10.63; J44, p.77). He spends time in ‘reasoned & analytical thought about painting’ although ‘no clear vision of the way ahead is apparent at the moment’. The following day he writes a short, notational entry consisting only of the following words: ‘Thursday (Some experiment with Teaser [?] – mf – normal activities). Quite good day of painting.’ (17.10.63; J44, p.77) Across these three journal entries we find the first instance of a productive cycle in which Vaughan pursues a vision of young male beauty, does not fulfil any potential for contact with that person, partakes in autoerotic practices, and then proceeds with painting in conjunction with autoeroticism.

While autoeroticism may have eased Vaughan’s sense of reliance on other people and their judgements of him (whether romantically or artistically), doubts persisted about the autoerotic practices themselves. Vaughan compares the practice Karezza to ‘drug addiction’ but without the obvious physical signs of damage, suggesting that he still felt that dependency would take its toll in unseen effects (05.11.63; J44, p.93). Shortly after he heads an entry ‘Dialogue’ and proceeds to write in the format of a discussion between ‘a’, who asks questions on the subject of work and masturbation, and ‘b’, who explains and justifies the routines practiced by Vaughan (15.11.63; J44, p.95).<sup>75</sup> Person ‘a’ asks how the day will be started and ‘b’ responds that it will commence with desire for the ‘soft machine’. Person ‘a’ acerbically comments that ‘b’ always wants to start the day with masturbation, but ‘b’ differentiates the procedure: ‘It[’]s not the same as masturbation. I don’t have to let myself come. I can make it like a sort of ordeal – testing myself – my will power.’

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<sup>75</sup> Interestingly this entire entry was at some point crossed through, albeit with a diagonal line on p.95 & p.98 and crossed diagonal lines on p.96 & p.97 leaving the text entirely legible.

Person 'a' suggests that 'b' could test his willpower by 'getting on with some work' but 'b' reminds him that work is just another kind of 'self indulgence', its only measure of success being whether he feels good about it afterwards. After further questioning, 'b' explains that he either needs sexual release before he begins painting or, 'better still, to tantalize myself a bit so it leaves you on the hop' (p.96). Person 'a' asks whether autoeroticism is a kind of 'cheat' in the absence of a sexual partner and wonders whether these activities dull his appetite for contact with another, yet 'b' has made it clear that he would go to brothels like those in North Africa<sup>76</sup> were they available but risk, expense, and the embarrassment of searching for them here is not for him (pp.96-7). The dialogue ends with 'b' describing an autoerotic session before work, his last words being that he was happy to excite and then deny himself (pp.97-8). This dialogue evidences how Vaughan could use journal-writing to interrogate himself and defend his practices by answering every conceivable question he could muster.

By the end of 1963, however, Vaughan was ready to denounce the year as 'one of the worst yet' (20.12.63; J44, p.113), his dejection compounded by his thwarted desires for an acquaintance named Roger for whom he had been declaring his love in the journal with romantic effusions one would associate more with his wartime journal-writing. In the next entry he assumes control over his desire for a partner by relaying an '[e]xtraordinary night with J.W. [Johnny Walsh]' during which they used Vaughan's collection of whips and his black box (22.12.63; J44, p.114). Flagellation fantasies became more prevalent in Vaughan's middle-age as his imagined interactions with other men became less romantically informed and more sexually aggressive. In 1959 he had watched youths in a gym and then imagined a 'tournament of endurance' involving whips (05.07.59; J42, pp.75-6). He had enthused over flagellation as a 'jousting of the mind + sex', writing that he craves 'the excitement of struggle' (p.76). Niklaus Largier argues that what makes the arousal of the flagellant 'exemplary' is that it 'performs and thematizes' a 'constitutive relation of dominance and submission, power and powerlessness'.<sup>77</sup> Vaughan had been using self-flagellation to perform this relation on his own terms when threatened by such external factors as ongoing domestic disputes. Feeling ill-equipped to deal with his conflict with Souza, he admits this situation is 'identical' to his helplessness at school and in the Corps before starting a new paragraph on the

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<sup>76</sup> Vaughan was intrigued by the tales of 'horizontal boys' in Morocco who laid perfectly still and therefore fulfilled the desire for a depersonalized sexual partner (07.05.62; J43, p.44).

<sup>77</sup> Niklaus Largier, *In Praise of the Whip: a Cultural History of Arousal* (New York, NY: Zone Books, 2007), p.449



process of caning his own buttocks through his trousers with a lead-tipped cane, 'A little exercise on the pain threshold' (25.10.63; J44, p.86). Here it is not only the action itself, which in its self-flagellating nature makes him both the master and sufferer of pain, but his writing about it – and particularly writing of the actions being in the context of his ongoing research – that helps him to reassert control over feelings of pain and humiliation. This suggests the most extreme iteration of the masturbatory dynamic of the journal-writer as both author and subject: the journal-writer as flagellant, both the master and the slave/sufferer. Despite the excited account of his night with Johnny, Vaughan admits that 'the sexual pleasure was less than when done alone – because as an image – he excites me less than fantasy images' (22.12.63; p.114). Johnny could not perform the sufferer as well as Vaughan could imagine or perform himself, being less erotically excited than simply friendly and obliging.

Wilhelm Stekel had in 1924 described sadomasochism as 'a form of psychosexual infantilism' accompanied by 'its most important phenomenon, flight from the partner'.<sup>78</sup> While Vaughan no doubt felt himself to some extent freed from his attraction to Roger and from the clutches of Ramsay, his night with Johnny only served to herald a spell of obsessing over him in his journal. The whole of late December 1963 and early January 1964 is dominated by entries about Johnny and various sexual experiments. He fancies that Johnny is 'the Saint that Sartre writes about' (01.01.64; J45, p.5) and for a time loses interest in the black box. Rank's view of the artist and his muse is too idealistic to be applied to Vaughan and Johnny; unlike Rank's theoretical artist, Vaughan never wanted to make Johnny 'his intellectual counterpart' or perhaps even his 'spiritual ideal'.<sup>79</sup> While Johnny is vaunted as a beautiful innocent, he must always be fundamentally different from Vaughan, not only because Vaughan fetishizes class difference but because his social and intellectual superiority over Johnny maintains his control. Their relationship was certainly not, as Rank suggests when considering the homosexual artist's muse, Vaughan's 'idealizing of oneself in the person of another'.<sup>80</sup> While maintaining control of relations with Johnny he confirms that he is painting well yet his opinion of his work takes a downward trajectory once this controlled lifestyle of sadomasochistic sessions is interrupted by Ramsay's return to Belsize Park (13.01.64; J45, pp.10-11). Matters then take a sour turn following a 'mad orgy' with

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<sup>78</sup> Wilhelm Stekel, *Sadism and Masochism: the Psychology of Hatred and Cruelty*, vol.1, trans. Louise Brink (London: John Lane, the Bodley Head, 1935), pp.57-60

<sup>79</sup> Rank, p.56

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

Johnny in which the young man arrives drunk and aggressive, a situation that throws Vaughan back to '10 years ago' (26.01.64; J45, p.15). He records that in the four days since his painting has suffered, with a 'blue 48x36' and a 40x36 originally started 'months ago in the depths of depression' having been 'obliterated and restarted' that afternoon. He lambasts his attempted reworking of the latter, calling it 'absurd' for its 'naturalistic – gesticulating figure' (p.16). In such instances journal-writing makes him once again the master and sufferer, this time of artistic critique.

Having fled from one partner and inadvertently become attached to another with undesirable consequences, Vaughan sought in the early months of 1964 to regain control of his desires and his creative practice. In an entry in which he comments on his reading of Van Gogh's letters he reasserts his own singularity as an artist and how only he is equipped to criticize his own work. He regards Van Gogh as a pathetic figure if only because 'his own estimation of himself was right – he was not of great importance as an artist' (10.02.64; J45, p.24). He then contradicts some recent positive assessments of his own work by declaring himself sickened by every canvas he has attempted in the last year; here, by becoming his own harshest critique, he takes control as both master and sufferer. The work he would exhibit that year at the Marlborough New London Gallery can, however, be considered amongst his finest to date; his studies for a Laocoon group, studies for a work inspired by Cymbeline, and his sixth, seventh, and eighth instalments in his *Assembly of Figures* series literally push the boundaries of his approach to figuration: 'Outlines have gone, and, like the figures themselves, the paint is dragged into the dark grounds, overlapped, merged and coarsened [...] It is as if Vaughan has been suddenly converted from classical ballet to the wildest extremes of modern dance.'<sup>81</sup> It is apparent that he largely dispensed with the technique of cloisonnism in the 1960s as his figures became less contained and more constituted – that is, given shape – by colliding colours. Although Vaughan had resolved to maintain a figurative anchor, he had been producing work that concerned itself not with observations of bodies but with highly subjective recollections of them, an art of sensation that was closer to the condition of abstract art as outlined by American critic Clement Greenberg in his 1944 essay on the subject. 'How good to be like Van G.', Vaughan patronizes in the aforementioned entry, 'with the great challenge of nature always before you', suggesting that he had moved further away from what Greenberg referred to as 'things we can experience more authentically elsewhere'

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<sup>81</sup> Yorke, p.215

and towards ‘only what goes on inside the self’<sup>82</sup>. Meanwhile Vaughan pressed on with his research into solitary sexual practices, revisiting the ‘Karezza principle’ and the problem of its possible nervous after-effects (24.02.64; J45, p.28). Seeking to improve the experience of ‘the withdrawal period’ he considers ways to re-engage the libido before answering the question as to whether his research is worth recording in the journal by resolving to proceed ‘as truthfully as possible’. To this end he devotes an entry to another dialogue addressing sexual practices (10.04.64; J45, pp.42-3). Each paragraph begins with a question phrased as if by a polite, non-judgemental interviewer (unlike the sardonic voice of previous dialogues). The subjects covered include electrical stimulation, deprivation of orgasm, and the degree of control that can be exercised over such practices, and all questions are calmly answered with an air of expertise. Two months later he writes four points of action for combatting depression, the second being: ‘Break the compulsive routine of subjective painting + masturbation.’ (21.06.64; J45, p.67) In drawing attention to the possible dangers of this oft-celebrated combination, he debunks any suggestion of complacency by insisting on his own conflicted reaction to this practice; once again, only he is qualified to criticize his work and his methods.

With the Whitechapel Gallery’s ‘New Generation’ exhibition championing the consumerist ephemera of pop art whilst threatening to render painting obsolete, Vaughan made particular journal entries his performance of rebelling against the conventional behaviour of a successful artist. His account of a day on which he received an honorary award begins:

Day of honours – sociosexual – ^Honorary^ Fellowship of the R.C.A. bequeathed and received with all the formal elegance & friendly goodwill which might be expected, followed within half an hour by a mouthful of hot spunk from a randy 20 year old Kenyan Indian, which was certainly not. (10.07.64; J45, p.70)

He explains that his motivation for accepting such a proposition in the nearby Kensington Gardens was curiosity and kindly obligingness, almost as if he were playing at being Johnny Walsh. He claims dismissively that he doesn’t look back on the escapade ‘with much pleasure’ but is clearly taken with having acted so subversively on a ceremonious day of professional recognition. Commenting on how good a guest he was at the subsequent formal lunch, he recounts speaking to a rapt Lady Eccles about how women shouldn’t try too hard to please men and should

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<sup>82</sup> Clement Greenberg, ‘Abstract Art’, in *The Collected Essays and Criticism, Volume 1: Perceptions and Judgements, 1939-1944*, ed. John O’Brian (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp.199-204; pp.203-4

perhaps take other lovers to improve their allure, remarking, 'Perhaps not the sort of table talk she was quite used to.' Amidst fears of his encroaching irrelevancy Vaughan desired to at least be at the vanguard in terms of sexual liberation and outspokenness in the face of tradition and formality. Meanwhile he sought to resist the fickle fashions of the contemporary art scene; coming a day after an entry that quoted two Slade entrance essays, and with the Marlborough show having opened successfully and sold plenty, he writes disapprovingly of the previous evening at a bohemian gathering. He complains about the copious 'name dropping' and being made to eat dinner off his own lap: 'No table, glasses on the floor. Brett's willful [*sic*] bohemianism – showing how artists should live. It[']s not that they are poor & there was a perfectly good table in the room.' (08.10.64; J46, p.22) He remarks, 'Vulgarity and showing off all the time. Must avoid these people in future.' Describing Vaughan's smart yet reserved style of dress, a former student of his attests that 'he never hammed it up as an artist'<sup>83</sup>; he took pleasure in keeping his subversions private in his journal where only he could see them and ascribe them value.

When Vaughan did desire a sexual partner he was now careful, as with the figures he painted, to depersonalize them as much as possible. Selecting partners according to his curiosity for the exotic helped in this regard and likely explains his acquiescence to the young 'Kenyan Indian'. The previous year he had enjoyed liaisons with a youth he referred to as the 'Thailander' and in spring 1964 he had a tryst with a 'Malayan', while in November 1964 he became fascinated by Eddie 'the negro' who he wrote of not as 'he' but 'it' – a specimen for inspection. Having purchased the house at Harrow Hill predominantly as a place to exile Ramsay, Vaughan was free to pursue promiscuity on his own particular terms.<sup>84</sup> He had written throughout that autumn of simply wanting willing bodies as opposed to encounters that could develop into any kind of interpersonal attachment. 'I have pretty much analysed myself out, or simply grown out, of a desire for homosexual encounters', he claims (27.09.64; J46, p.19), and clarifies several weeks later, 'Desire is simply for sexual play with another, ~~but~~ another male body, not another person.' (18.10.64; J46, p.28) And yet the reality of a second person continued to hamper the possibility of enjoying the sexual sensation alone: 'I go out to buy a body, just for a change, deliberately selecting 'Trade' so as to escape commitment. But the body, once in bed, becomes invested with a human personality to which tenderness & love is the only response.' (12.11.64; J46, p.33) As such, 'Sex is killed with a sense of guilt

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<sup>83</sup> Yorke, p.199

<sup>84</sup> Ramsay had to live in an unheated shed whilst the renovations at Harrow Hill took place and was only allowed to return to Belsize Park with Vaughan's permission; Yorke, p.233

– guilt at taking advantage – buying what was offered.’ Nevertheless, as trade these men were in no position to pass judgement themselves with Vaughan the only party qualified to comment. Otto Weininger, in *Sex and Character* (1903), had written that, ‘The highest form of eroticism, as much of the lowest form of sexuality, uses the woman not for herself but as a means to an end – to preserve the individuality of the artist.’<sup>85</sup> In this respect, Weininger asserts, ‘[t]he artist has used the woman merely as the screen on which to project his own idea.’<sup>86</sup> Vaughan’s relations with men were much the same: even in his guilt he found inscribed into their physical forms only the traces of his own desire. As an artist, he only perceived sexual relationships as opportunities to test and assert his own ideas and strength of character.

In October 1964 Vaughan writes very eloquently on how he is finally done as an artist: ‘The compensatory activity of art, began in adolescence from fear of life, has now reached its end. I have made my image, my substitute. There is nothing more to say.’ (24.10.64; J46, p.30) Having painted and exhibited works of wildly expressive yet depersonalized figures and thus perfected his art of sensation, there was nothing more to be done. Fancying himself to be wearing the same boots that he wore in Toulon aged twenty-one, on his first trip to France, he remarks how this would be ‘[t]ypical of the absurd imobility [*sic*] of my life, stuck fast in the past. Other people’s lives change and develop.’ He has his affair with Eddie ‘the negro’ before the year peters out with familiar reflections and regrets. Using posterity as a kind of defence, he explains once again that he continues writing simply because ‘the truth must be told’ (18.12.64; J46, p.41). In the new year he sets about redrafting his erotic story ‘The Corporal’ and has a prolific spell of producing gouaches. In the springtime he returns to his desire for a new goal in his work, beginning an entry by noting his activities and his medication and by seemingly ruing the absence of ‘a state of sexual tension’ (18.03.65; J46, p.68). He desires a ‘new problem to struggle with’ amidst concerns that he is reproducing the same image, but counters that ‘most middle aged artists’ are probably ‘quite happy to turn out replicas of once important situations’ and that there’s ‘a continual demand for the Vaughan figure – why not supply it’ (p.69). Yet he cannot avoid ‘a sense of guilt that it should be so easy to make the money to live by’. Aware, perhaps too keenly, of commercial factors he figures his visual work in terms that recall his bouts of guilt

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<sup>85</sup> Extract reprinted in Bland and Doan, p.26

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

surrounding masturbation: his pictures are tossed off in a process of repetitive indulgence devoid of challenge.

A week later, Vaughan confirms that his challenge lies in the field of sexual research by building an argument in his journal for the value of erotic play. He begins with a quote attributed to Franz Alexander, whose papers he has been reading with interest: "Every gratification of an impulse has an erotic character if it is performed for its own sake & is not subservient to the needs of the organism as a whole." (25.03.65; J46, p.71) He defines 'entropy', quotes Ferenczi on how every organ has "a physiology of pleasure in contrast to its physiological function", and makes a note to read Ortega y Gasset's *Toward a Philosophy of History* (1941). He provides a definition of 'homeostatic' ('Self-preservation functions') and considers theories of behaviour going back to ancient cultures, comparing systemized homeostatic behaviour and 'play'. Overleaf he writes the heading 'On Sadism' and argues for the necessity of pain – differentiated from the desire to destroy a person by being instead 'strictly determined & often of an aesthetic nature' – to accompany pleasure; this is summarized in his phrase, 'The inability to bear pleasure without pain.' (p.72) The final paragraph begins by drawing together the preceding readings, allusions, and definitions: 'There is only one instinct, eros, the striving for self realization + creative self-expression. Against this is entropy, common to all things, organic + inorganic. The contest is between eros + entropy. No need to postulate a death 'instinct'.' This revision of the Freudian duality posits eros as the only active force and all else as stasis and stagnation. Here Vaughan draws on the psychoanalytical, the anthropological, and the aesthetic to argue for the erotic nature of every expressive and creative impulse beyond simply surviving. For Vaughan the only way to keep progressing, to fight entropy, is to embrace play – to experiment with pleasure and pain; death is simply the failure to do so.

For a brief time he does not alter his autoerotic practices and even resolves to no longer record them in his journal: 'Unless notice is given to the contrary it may be assumed they follow the pattern already established.' (25.04.65; J47, pp.7-8) Yet the following month brought a spell of experimentation and subsequent journal-writing that was unprecedented in its extremity. Early in May, having bemoaned how Ramsay's presence drags him down yet instils 'guilt & remorse' that becomes 'unbearable', he remarks that it is once again 'the mating season' when he yearns for 'a warm & passionate affair, a sexual object other than myself' (02.05.65; J47, pp.8-9). Rather than contacting Johnny Walsh or pursuing an exotic body, he would experiment on himself and write up his investigations as if he were a scientist

testing procedures on an anonymous subject. Having confirmed that Ramsay is currently away, he resolves in an entry with the margin heading 'ON MASTURBATION' that he must 'overcome or repress masturbation guilt' and develop his endurance of the 'masochistic element in masturbation' (17.05.65; J47, p.13). He describes how he can exercise an enjoyable level of control in a 'prolonged session', how he aims to choose stimulating photographs that are more suggestive than plainly erotic, and how he sets the temporal parameters for autoerotic sessions (pp.14-5). He then writes the new heading 'Report on Procedure' (p.15) and proceeds with three pages throughout which he refers to himself in the third person as 'the subject' and records the administration of various apparatus and treatments as if by unseen experimenters.<sup>87</sup> The register here is very detached, the prose very economical and considered (with only five corrections in the whole passage), and the detail extensive. He then records 'Conditions on Rising', including a full debrief on the subject's physical and mental state, and notes his arousal by memories of this session 'when report was being written' (p.18). The entry dated two days later is headed 'REPORT' in the margin and documents another session using electrodes and stimulating photographs. Again he refers to 'the subject' in a detached register that only occasionally slips from the scientific into the sensual ('He expressed the feeling that liquid gold was pouring out of his body'; 19.05.65; J47, p.19). Again he records a happy and satisfied condition the following morning on which this report was written (p.20). The next entry is the third consecutive such report, although now he is referred to as 'the patient'. Following an account of play with the black box and a codpiece, he begins a passage headed in the margin as 'MUSTARD BURNING' (20.05.65; J47, p.21). In 'the treatment room' after a meal, 'fresh mustard' is applied to the inside of his foreskin and on his newly shaved testicles before finally being applied to his anus. Following a bath he recommences 'electrical treatment' and then goes to bed (pp.21-2). Under the heading 'Condition the next day' he reports being aroused once again by the writing of the report (p.22). He proceeds with further electrical play, making use of clips to his nipples and scrotum and eventually ejaculating before becoming tired and sore (p.23). He justifies these extensive records as the sessions – 'an average of 6-7 hours on three consecutive evenings' – were unprecedented in scope and variety. Finally he suggests a disciplined daily routine to avoid over-indulgence, signalling his concerns regarding any negative long-term effects or resulting dependency.

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<sup>87</sup> Vaughan had previously harboured fantasies of being controlled and experimented upon, fancying perhaps by a figure in one of his photographs (10.04.64; J45, p.42).

The extremes to which Vaughan pushed himself in pursuit of pleasure and pain, being the artist who pleases himself and his own curiosity, had to take their toll. Only a few days after the third and final 'report' he writes an entry consisting of only a single sentence: 'Dear God – shall I ever come out of this hell.' (25.05.65; J47, p.27) There is evidence in his journal that Vaughan once again took pleasure in his outrageousness: he records attending a party at the Marlborough Gallery as being an interlude between autoerotic sessions and mentions collecting £1125 'from the Redfern [Gallery] today' having just postulating a situation in which tobasco sauce is applied to the genitalia of a teenage boy whilst he is lashed to a chair with a camera rolling (02.06.65; J47, pp.27-8). Nevertheless the extremity of his practices seems to have impacted on his ability to conduct affairs with a partner when desired. With Ramsay having left again after only two days back in London, Vaughan spends a sleepless night with twenty-year-old Gerald (who is later codified as 'G') yet is unable to achieve climax; he admits to feeling ashamed without 'the autoerotic façade' and to being 'unable to ejaculate' (04.06.65; J47, p.29). His unease is compounded by the guilt he felt upon hearing Ramsay, so long neglected emotionally and sexually, confess that he is no longer capable of feeling anything. Vaughan closes by writing ruefully, 'Now alone, I put on my flagellation jeans with a sickening feeling of futility.' Whereas the journal had been used to report the extent and radical nature of his autoerotic investigations, it now turned to examining his guilt and its impact on his ability to interact romantically and sexually with other men. If Vaughan, as a keen reader of sexological research, also read Wilhelm Reich's *The Function of the Orgasm* (1927), then he likely would have doubted his own ability to achieve what Reich termed 'orgastic potency', the ability to 'surrender to and experience the climax of excitation in the natural sexual act' upon which an individual's psychic health is contingent<sup>88</sup>. This ability 'is founded upon the healthy character attitude of the individual's capacity for love'<sup>89</sup>, a capacity Vaughan would likely have now ruled out having. Vaughan recalls inviting Gerald over on a Saturday but clarifies that they eventually just cuddled and slept as he was experiencing 'guilt accompanying any sexual act' ('WIT [?] MONDAY'<sup>90</sup>; J47, p.29). In the next entry he quotes from Kenneth Clark's *The Nude* (11.06.65; J47, p.30), and in the entry after that describes a night with Mike: 'I held him in my arms exactly in the position of the S. Peter's Pieta, which K.C. thinks is the most poignant + moving male nude in the whole history of art. True.' (13.06.65; J47, p.31) He continues by enthusing over

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<sup>88</sup> Wilhelm Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm: Sex-economic Problems of Biological Energy*, trans. Vincent R. Carfagno (London: Souvenir Press, 1983), p.6

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Likely 7<sup>th</sup> June 1965.



Mike's 'form, shape, line' as 'equal to anything MichaelA created' (p.32). Across these three entries Vaughan manages his guilt-stricken inability to consummate a sexual attraction by refiguring his interactions as having an aesthetically-informed nobility in their sexless stillness.

'I look back on my autoerotic sessions of recent weeks with horror + astonishment', Vaughan writes, having opened a journal entry by reflecting on Gerald, who reminds him of Raul, and considering the value of 'a warm boy of 19 to sleep with' (15.06.65; J47, p.32). He asks, 'How could I possibly prefer such things to the tender love of a boy?' Yet he already allows for a recurrence of such a situation by acknowledging, 'I did, + no doubt shall again.' He describes how years ago he would destroy his autoerotic equipment – his equivalent, perhaps, of slashing canvasses – in guilt and shame only to rebuild it soon afterwards (pp.32-3). Here Vaughan is able to have it both ways, writing with an awareness of his guilt yet pre-empting his return to full autoerotic immersion. He cannot control when his desires will lead him back there, yet he regains some control by writing of his awareness that it will eventually happen. In a later entry he declares that the journal has 'become sordid + self indulgent, like my life' and that he settles 'for the masturbatory fantasy all the time', linking his ritual of self-pleasure inextricably to his practice of journal-writing (03.07.65; J47, p.39). 'That is the only thing I have improved at', he claims, 'masturbation.' Here he once again takes up the position of being the only one qualified to criticize whilst also underlining the continued importance of his autoerotic practice to his creative life – the arena in which he is making most progress as a researcher and practitioner. In an entry dated 'Monday', he defends masturbation as a use of his time no different from going to the cinema, socializing, or gallery-going before declaring, 'If it feels right in your prick then that is the truth.' ('Monday'; J47, p.46) While he claims that immersion in fantasies cannot endure, he explains that with someone like Gerald 'the sentiments of gratitude, affection, protective concern – truly cancel out the original sexual urge' (p.47). He asserts that sex with a partner has rarely matched up to masturbation, making an exception only for Johnny who he argues is simultaneously a fantasy and yet real (and who, not being dependent on Vaughan emotionally, 'can be kept at arm's length'). In the subsequent entry, having ostensibly purged his professed guilt, he re-states for the first time in weeks his need to push on with his autoerotic research. Having described his completion of another erotic fiction and his enjoyment of a session with the black box, he declares: 'I shall have achieved something if I succeed in restoring mf to a more respectable place in the repertory

[sic] of sexual activities.’ (‘Wednesday; J47, p.48) Amongst the conditions in which masturbation is most beneficial he identifies the presence of a strong imagination (hence, he notes, its prevalence amongst artists) and those who have trouble forming relationships – situations both with which he strongly identified. Throughout recent journal entries he had examined the impact of his guilt yet gradually provided further justification for his return to autoeroticism and its importance to his creative life. In doing so he consolidated a conflict between irreconcilable opposing forces, the conflict he had for decades sought after, but now finally on terms over which he had ultimate control.

In 1943, concerned as to whether he could ever become an artist, Vaughan constructed the artist as a type, one that he was in many respects already qualified to be, and constructed himself through journal-writing in accordance with that type. For Vaughan, the artist was always engaged in a search, rejecting easy answers but ready to act on impulse; this justified Vaughan’s wartime restlessness as being productive in itself, therefore putting him in the exalted company of noteworthy artists. The art he sought to produce was that marked by the struggle between turbulent opposing forces, a material rendering of the inner life of an artist; his journal-writing, having established the necessary typology, provided the documented proof of such an inner life. By 1963, Vaughan was concerned by what kind of artist he had become, beset by anxieties surrounding productivity and progress. In this period Vaughan recalibrates the type of the artist to be even more individualistic: he who satisfies only himself whilst maintaining complete control over his practice. He constructs himself in accordance with this type, his journal-writing on his studio life of sexual and painterly activities bringing his pleasure and pain within authoritative control whilst creating and sustaining a productive conflict on his own terms that justifies his lack of involvement with others. He no longer aspires to the achievements of other artists and defies conventional notions of success and appropriate behaviour in order to distinguish himself from his contemporaries. The art he produces, the trace of his life of sensation, is only as good as he adjudges it to be – it is his image and his alone.

**CURATOR**

## 5. Self-editorship and 'Keith Vaughan'

In the summer of 1965 Vaughan could be found in a familiar situation: undergoing sessions with his black box in the absence of 'bodies for hire' (22.07.65; J47, p.57) whilst rejecting the 'bloodsucking cancerous 'Love'' offered by Ramsay (23.07.65; J47, p.57). But amidst the well-established routine of immersive fantasizing and autoerotic activity, Vaughan had begun working on a new project which he first mentions in the entry dated 24<sup>th</sup> August 1965:

Spent the week putting into typescript all the possible passages from the Journal since Mexico [...] Find I am quite able to revise & rewrite passages straight on the typewriter, which will save much time. Have already done 33 foolscap pages (double line spaced) + should get perhaps 36-40 with the Moroccan pages. All this for A.R. who wants me to plan a book on myself. (J47, pp.78-9)

The 'A.R.' in question was the writer and editor Alan Ross, a friend to whom Vaughan had first considered bequeathing his journal, in the event of his death, in an entry in 1959, Ross seeming 'as good a person as any' (09.01.59; J40, p.46). Despite Vaughan's offhandedness here, it is clear from his choice of Ross as custodian that he expected the publication of his journal in some form if only posthumously. The idea clearly stuck, as evidenced by an entry written two years later in which Vaughan leaves an instruction in parentheses addressed to 'A.R' regarding the formatting of any eventual published edition – an instruction that he happened to cross through after further thought (18.05.61; J42, pp.153-4). But such instructions to Ross were ultimately unnecessary as by August 1965 Vaughan was self-editing the book that would be published the following year under the title *Journal & Drawings*. This 'conglomeration of words and images'<sup>1</sup>, published through Ross, contained over two hundred pages of dated journal entries chronologically ordered into seven parts and illustrated with drawings and photographs.

This chapter examines the processes by which Vaughan self-edited the published edition of his journal and analyses the account of 'Keith Vaughan' that *Journal & Drawings* presents to its reader. In an entry from earlier in 1965, having argued for his right to no longer be ashamed of his autoerotic equipment and practices, Vaughan admitted, 'I am obliged to preserve a totally false image of myself

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<sup>1</sup> Keith Vaughan, *Journal & Drawings* (London: Alan Ross, 1966), p.8. Hereafter, page references are given in parentheses accompanied by the abbreviation *J&D* where necessary.

in the eyes of others' (02.05.65; J47, p.9); this chapter considers how Vaughan sought through self-editorship to convey a true image of himself as a man and as an artist. It must be noted that Vaughan had already overseen the publication of extracts from his journal on several occasions. During wartime his journal entry dated 19<sup>th</sup> June 1940 had been substantially reworked for publication in *Penguin New Writing*, and in 1962 journal entries had appeared in both *The London Magazine's* July issue ('Atlantic Crossing (Extracts from a Journal)') and in the catalogue for Vaughan's exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery ('Extracts from a Journal 1943-61'). Despite such exposure for material selected from the journal, Vaughan in 1965 was still inclined to lament the 'false image' he believed was in circulation and compelled to correct it through the curation of material fit for publication in a definitive edition. The first section of this chapter addresses Vaughan's practices of re-reading his journal and looks to his typescripts to evidence the revisions he made to the content and style of particular journal entries. The second section reveals how Vaughan shaped the text of his journal through extensive editing into the narrative we find in *Journal & Drawings*. The third section of this chapter surveys the placement of drawings and photographs in *Journal & Drawings* and how words and images work to communicate the interrelations between his journal-writing and visual practice. This third and final section will also consider the term 'image' with regards to the published edition's reception and Vaughan's perception of his own public image in its wake.

### **i. Re-reading the Journal**

While the summer of 1965 marked the beginning of a concerted editorial endeavour, it must be clarified that Vaughan had been frequently returning to and re-reading the previous volumes, and particularly the wartime volumes, of his journal for at least a decade. In a 1955 entry, written during a fallow period for the largely neglected journal, he writes, 'During the last 2 days I have read most of my wartime journals', and claims to be shocked by the monotony of the Eden Camp entries (01.02.55; J35, pp.8-9). Several years later, during the onset of love-struck restlessness that preceded his trip to Iowa and later Mexico, he claims that he is gradually 'being forced back into the states of mind of 1942-5', yet makes it clear that, 'This is no great disaster, since I was undoubtedly very much alive then' (06.01.59; J40, pp.41-2). Despite the perception in this later commentary of the

wartime journal as documenting a juvenile period, there has been an evident re-evaluation of the period before and at Eden Camp as a time of genuine engagement with the challenges presented by people and ideas. By 1961, he was reminiscing in the early hours, ‘Remember the nights in Eden Camp – writing away [...] A wholly illusionistic world around. Everyone else asleep but you. Who were writing.’ (04.10.61; J43, p.16) That Vaughan’s affection for these formative years grew as he entered the early 1960s is understandable, given that he was increasingly hounded by fears of disconnection and disillusion as an ostensibly successful artist; in the wartime volumes he rediscovers a casually exceptional younger self distinguished from his comrades, one who had ‘nothing particular to say beyond the classical human problems – who & where & why’. Six months later he comments upon having comprehensively revisited those earlier volumes:

Curiously moved to reread the whole of my journal from 1939 to end of army. Some good passages I thought – about Freddie – people – landscape. But the wearisome monotony of self-doubt – loneliness – longing for ‘love’ in endless labyrinthine prose which I must have thought Proustian [...] If the pages give off some of the ^smell and^ stifling agony of those years then that ~~is enough~~ is as it should be. (28.04.62; J43, p.43)

This passage offers a first glimpse through Vaughan’s editorial eye as he selects material of merit whilst disapproving of the subject matter and prose style of the more repetitious entries – even if their repetitious nature at least proved representative.

When consulting the original journal volumes it is apparent that, predominantly, Vaughan was not compelled to rewrite material written years previously directly onto the manuscripts themselves. He did, however, have brief spells of anxiety in which he removed anything he feared to be especially incriminating regarding his meetings with other men. ‘Periodically this so takes hold of me’, he explains in the late 1950s, ‘that I go back, blocking out compromising passages from the past’ (14.12.58; J40, p.14). Such instances were rare and Vaughan was probably compelled to offer an explanation here simply because he had several pages earlier deleted a whole paragraph using thick black marker pen (21.09.58; J40, p.3). But by the mid-1960s, having perhaps realized the usefulness of the journal as the document of a period’s attitudes during his re-reading of the wartime volumes, he was less prone to deleting material and more keen to occasionally annotate and comment upon specific incidents and states of mind – as evidenced by an annotation found in the entry dated 9<sup>th</sup> January 1959 (ascribed in parentheses to ‘Sept/64’) in which Vaughan adds his current thoughts to a question of writing for a

potential audience (J40, p.45). We find further evidence that Vaughan was at this time engaging with previous journal volumes as important documents in his reaction to the 'repetitive monotony' of his lengthy diatribes against Ramsay, discovered when he 'reread the last 2 years note books recently (looking for something quite different)' (20.09.64; J46, p.13). This practice of re-reading previous volumes had become an effective way of unearthing information. By the mid-1960s Vaughan was regularly using the journal as a tool for navigating the past.

Revisiting the journal as his own editor in the summer of 1965, Vaughan was already very familiar with its contents from numerous re-readings. The extent of his familiarity may account for why, following its first mention in the entry dated 24<sup>th</sup> August 1965, he makes scant reference to his editorial task in the journal-writing covering the half-year period in which he is preparing his selection for Alan Ross. Whilst re-reading and revising material from previous volumes he does not record any observations on his editorial process or the material itself, save for a sardonic comment on how 'in the early volumes of this journal was the refrain if only I had someone to love & who loved me', which seems 'ironical' now that he is shackled to Ramsay (08.10.65; J48, p.7). The only comments on his editorial task in the period's journal-writing are brief and begrudging in attitude, as with an entry written following the 'complete failure' of a show of gouaches in which Vaughan admits this failure helped neither his mood 'nor the self imposed task of re-reading & putting into typescript the early volumes of this journal' having 'almost decided to give it up' (02.10.65; J48, p.7). The completion of his task accordingly receives little fanfare; in January 1966 he declares himself to have 'now completed all the necessary work on the Journal for publication' and seemingly dismisses his achievement by simply wishing now 'to have some interesting work on hand' (11.01.66; J48, p.16). Of all that could have been learned during his months of re-reading, the only result is allegedly an increased caution as to what is written: 'The less said the better. It does not make good reading.' (24.01.66; J48, p.22)

With the journal entries of 1965-6 providing no substantial record of Vaughan's editorial process, we must turn to his typescripts for an insight into his months of re-reading and revising material. The typescripts are foolscap pages of typed text with annotations made by Vaughan in biro and black and red ink pens.<sup>2</sup> These annotated typescripts present the final versions of the edited entries as they

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<sup>2</sup> All references to Vaughan's typescripts refer to the contents of two folders titled 'KV's preparations for publication of 'Journals and Drawings' 1966', held at Tate Archive, London, catalogue ref: TGA 200817/6/3. The pages of the typescripts are loose and have not been numbered by Tate.

ultimately appeared in *Journal & Drawings*. It is highly likely that these were the typescripts that Alan Ross worked from judging from the fact that Vaughan's remaining uncorrected typos slipped through into the published volume.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately the earliest journal entry with a corresponding typescript is 7<sup>th</sup> March 1944, meaning that we have no working notes from Vaughan's editing of entries dated before this. The typescript pages covering entries from 7<sup>th</sup> March 1944 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1945 are on brown paper and are for the most part annotated extensively in biro and black pen with additions, deletions, and revisions to phrasing, spelling and punctuation; prior to annotation the material that Vaughan typed on these pages already differed significantly from the corresponding original journal entries with many major textual changes evident, therefore the annotations in pen mark a further stage of revision upon his re-reading the typescripts. From the dividing page headed 'POST-WAR' with the categorization '4. JOURNAL AUG 1948 – MARCH 1959', a handwritten sheet placed between typescript pages, the typescripts proceed on a higher quality white paper and in crisper, clearer black type; most significantly, there are considerably fewer corrections on these pages (most of them changes to spelling mistakes or punctuation), with the vast majority of entries having undergone all of their (often extensive) revisions in the process of having been typed. For example, the typescript corresponding to the original journal entry dated 17<sup>th</sup> January 1958 provides a version that has removed the original entry's concluding material (on writing his erotic fiction, 'The Adolescent'), reworded the remaining material, and added a newly invented flourish (pertaining to an alleged moment of clarity) with only one correction (the addition of an 'n' to the German word 'Lebe') made in biro to the typed text.

Vaughan's ability to revise whilst typing reminds us of his claim in the entry dated 24<sup>th</sup> August 1965 to be 'quite able to revise & rewrite passages straight on the typewriter'. The improvement in this ability as evidenced by the fewer annotations to the typescripts would suggest that the white pages covering August 1948 to August 1965 were indeed typed after the brown pages. The two typescripts corresponding to the entry dated 31<sup>st</sup> December 1945 offer further evidence to this effect. Both start from the same point (a reflection on the global ceasefire) and therefore already mark a significant departure from the original entry (which begins by addressing readings of Cyril Connolly and Gide). The first typescript begins on the brown paper for two pages (continuing on a very thin grade of paper for two further pages) and features many corrections including those made to three

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<sup>3</sup> For example: 'I know my job and there always work for me to do' ('21 October 1944', *J&D*, p.99); 'what is appropriate to reveal, what conceal' ('12 October 1961', *J&D*, p.186).



consecutive short paragraphs on the second page which are struck through with biro line-by-line then crossed through for good measure. The extent of the corrections likely drove Vaughan to type a second draft which appears on the white paper and in the clearer type characteristic of the other white pages. This second transcript only runs to two-and-a-half pages and features no corrections at all in biro. Yet the question remains as to how much earlier the brown pages were typed – a question likely to persist given that Vaughan did not date them. That Vaughan should only mention in the entry dated 24<sup>th</sup> August 1965 that he has been typing up ‘passages from the Journal since Mexico’ (i.e. since June 1959), does not necessarily mean that he had not already, some time prior to that week, been typing up earlier journal entries – especially when we consider his general lack of interest in providing a commentary on his editorial task in his current journal-writing. Then again, Vaughan may have prepared transcripts even before he was approached by Alan Ross as extracts had been published elsewhere (as discussed above). There is an entry from 1949 in which Vaughan describes Ramsay as being ‘in the room now, reading the typescript of the earlier journal’, suggesting that Vaughan may have already embarked upon a process of transcription many years before the mid-1960s (25.04.49; J32, p.15).

Regardless of their dates of composition, Vaughan’s typescripts provide an insight into his processes of re-reading the journal and making revisions to the text. Early in 1963, having already the previous year edited selections from his journal for a Whitechapel exhibition catalogue, Vaughan wrote of his interest in two versions of the same letter by Stendhal to Balzac. He praises the first as ‘more spontaneous, more honest’ but explains that Stendhal ‘supresses’ it as being too egotistical and reworks it, wary as the Frenchman is of, in his own words, “such naked truth” (08.02.63; J43, p.102). A close look at Vaughan’s typescripts confirms that he was willing to revise material at both the typing stage and subsequently with annotations in biro and ink pen, suggesting that in practice, if not in theory, he believed he was maintaining fidelity to the past not through strict adherence to the more spontaneously produced original text but by making clearer the connections between ideas within the incidents and conversations of the period. The typescript for the entry dated 18<sup>th</sup> April 1944 evidences how he approached one such conversation with Graham Sutherland by cutting together the most compelling ideas that arose. This typescript also exemplifies the extent of the structural changes – to both sentences and entire passages – made by Vaughan in the typing stage and then subsequently with annotations. The two-page typescript and the resulting published version of the entry dated 18<sup>th</sup> April 1944 are only concerned with adapting material

from the first two-and-a-half pages (J20, pp.12-4) of the original five-page entry. This suggests that in re-reading Vaughan selected the material that would make a published journal entry coherent and self-contained. In the original journal manuscript, the entry begins, 'I want to note down as much as I remember about Graham's remarks the last time I was at Trottiscliffe.' (p.12) In Vaughan's typescript, this entry begins, 'I want to set down all I can remember of what S. said last Sunday about painting.' The typescript is annotated in biro to replace the initial with the full name 'Graham Sutherland', a correction that proceeds to the final published version (*J&D*, p.82). In just this first sentence we find that Vaughan has made his most substantial cuts during the typing stage before making his final handwritten alterations. In the original entry, Vaughan follows his opening sentence with a paragraph on the unfolding circumstances of his visit, namely Sutherland still being 'out with the home guard' so that he has to go and drink with Katherine Sutherland in a nearby pub before his mentor arrives exuberantly in a manner described affectionately by Vaughan; in the typescript, there is no mention of these circumstances, the element of personal anecdote (or, as with Stendhal's first letter, the superfluously 'egotistical') removed. Instead, the first sentence of the typescript is followed immediately by, 'We were discussing the question of perfection in art', a shortened and reworded version of the original entry's opening to its second paragraph (the original has the less suggestive 'subject of perfection' as opposed to the revised 'question'). Here we find Vaughan identifying the key content of an entry and cutting anything extraneous during the typing stage.

The typescript of the entry dated 18<sup>th</sup> April 1944 also reveals how Vaughan used both the typing stage and subsequent annotation to experiment with structure – particularly when seeking to expand on certain material. From the point after Vaughan and Sutherland's discussion on Bellini and Mantegna, the original entry and the typescript diverge significantly. The original entry recounts Sutherland's thoughts on the near-perfection of Seurat's *Bathers at Asnières* (1884) and the unresolvable forms in Picasso's paintings before Vaughan proposes a theory on two categories of art (one that is extroverted and confident and one that is an expression of struggle) that is apparently met lukewarmly by his mentor (pp.13-4). They talk on the relevance of painting the great myths – for example, Prometheus or the life of Christ – before Sutherland is quoted on the subject of the latter: "It[']s an embarrassing situation, to say the least of it", he said, "To contemplate a man nailed to a piece of wood in the presence of his friends." (p.14) A further page follows on Vaughan discussing with Sutherland some concerns about his own practice (pp.14-5) before the entry, after a line break, switches for its remainder to the subject of

Vaughan's reading of David Gascoyne's poems. The typescript, meanwhile, follows the material on Seurat and Picasso with an explication of Vaughan's theory on art that expands the barely three-line précis of the original entry to two full paragraphs (almost half of Vaughan's total typescript for this entry). This material – which seeks to evidence Vaughan's argument on two categories of art with references to 'early quasi-anonymous art' and the contrasting subjective approach 'particularly exemplified in Cézanne' – borrows much of its phrasing and examples from material originally appearing in the journal entry dated 16<sup>th</sup> May 1943 (and discussed in the previous chapter of this study) on the distinction made between two broadly defined 'psychological urges' underpinning artistic creation (J15, pp.14-5). The typescript then concludes with a paragraph on the relevance of painting the great myths, their reality as subjects, and closes with the quotation of Sutherland's quip concerning the crucifixion. Yet Vaughan's annotations to the typescript reveal his unhappiness with the aforementioned expansion of his theory on art; he strikes through those two paragraphs with biro and, sure enough, it does not proceed to the published version (which simply transitions from the subjects of perfection in Seurat and Picasso to the discussion on painting mythic subjects).

The typescript of the entry dated 28<sup>th</sup> April 1944 – the entry that immediately follows 18<sup>th</sup> April in *Journal & Drawings* – reveals less about how Vaughan sought to restructure ideas and more about his approach as a prose stylist. This entry recounts a walk to Castle Howard and describes its grounds. Vaughan was aware that his original journal-writing had been prone to repetition and over-elaboration (his embarrassment, in 1962, at emulating 'Proustian' prose tells us as much) and was therefore aiming to distil his prose into something clearer and more concise; he was, however, still looking to add extra flourishes where appropriate. Having already honed the text of 28<sup>th</sup> April 1944 during the typing stage, Vaughan made further cuts to extraneous descriptive material in his annotations to the typescript (struck through with biro as follows): 'two further folds of the ~~gently rolling~~ hills'; 'sheltered from the wind ~~that always blows~~'; 'everything seemed abandoned ~~and still~~'. Whilst typing he had added further description of 'the scars of the fire' that marked the age of the building; when re-reading the typescript and refocusing on the need for concision, he struck this sentence through in biro and consequently it did not proceed to the published version. Following the description of a stone screen he had typed a passage (elaborating on some weathered neo-renaissance carvings) with which he intended to close the paragraph – a passage that had already substantially reworded material from the original entry – but again struck it through in biro, realizing upon re-reading that it was inessential. Some

additions made during the typing stage did survive his subsequent annotations and proceed to the published version, albeit having being altered further in black ink pen. The three-line passage that reads, 'A hand covering [...] books unopened' is a new invention for the typescript with no source in the original journal. Following the semi-colon after 'closed windows', Vaughan had typed, 'and an air of genteel boredom', yet this is corrected by being struck through in black ink and accompanied by the annotation, 'an expensive chair moved out of the rays of the encroaching sun', a more evocative ending that proceeds to the published version. This typescript provides evidence that when re-reading and revising the typescripts Vaughan generally made deletions in biro whilst adding and correcting new material in black ink pen.

Due to the incriminating nature of much of his journal at a time when homosexuality was still illegal, there was more at stake during the editing process than simply the improvement of one's prose. The entry dated 18<sup>th</sup> September 1948 addresses the problem of having another person be emotionally dependent on you – a relevant issue to Vaughan during his acrimony with Ramsay that perhaps explains its selection for the published edition. The corresponding typescript for this entry evidences how Vaughan made several subtle but important changes during the typing stage and once again when annotating the typescript in order to remove suggestions of a romantic or sexual relationship with 'J'<sup>4</sup>. The original entry begins: 'Cris de coeur tonight. Why? over J?' (J13, p.27) The typescript, however, begins: 'What to do about X? For some time now it has been evident that my relationship with him is entirely one-sided.' In the original entry Vaughan admits, 'Yet I feel tied to him; although there would be no material difficulty about having finished with him – his pride would ~~not allow~~ prevent him clinging on unwanted (I think).' In the typescript this sentence is shortened to, 'Yet I feel tied to him', with all reference to 'having finished' with someone removed due to its implication of a strong bond that is usually inferred as romantic and that invokes the romantic lexicon of a 'break up'. Another passage in the original that was cut during the typing stage reads: 'I do not think I have cause for self-reproach. I have demanded nothing. Accepted nothing which was ~~not~~ against his nature.' In considering the question of guilt and whether one has coerced someone beyond what their 'nature' allows, this passage was likely deemed too incriminating by Vaughan and was also cut during the typing stage. There was, however, a phrase that slipped through into the typescript for this entry that Vaughan returned to and struck through with biro; after 'childish gratitude', he

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<sup>4</sup> Given that in 1948 Vaughan had not yet met Johnny Walsh this 'J' may refer to John McGuinness.

remarks, 'On the face of it my going with it would seem pure philanthropy.' Perhaps he thought upon re-reading the typescript that the openness of 'it' to interpretation was too dangerous, or that the invocation of 'philanthropy' suggested a relationship made possible by an abuse of his position. The typescript for this entry proves how adept Vaughan was at selecting potentially risky material for publication but making judicious cuts that steered clear of anything incriminating.

In addition to revealing Vaughan's processes of re-reading and revising, the typescripts offer insights into Vaughan's practice of selecting which entries were to be included for publication, where they would be sequenced, and in what form. There are two consecutive typescripts – dated 'July 10 1945' and 'July 23 1945' – that have each been struck through entirely with a single diagonal line in biro; accordingly, they do not feature in the published volume. The handwritten sheets that act as dividing pages between planned sections reveal changes made between Vaughan's division of the book's parts and the final published edition; for example, his page headed '3. WAR' gives dates from 'June 24 1944 – March 1946' but this does not match with *Journal & Drawings*, which incorporates in its fourth part entries from October 1944 to March 1946. The typescripts also identify instances in which Vaughan inserted material from elsewhere. In some cases, material was inserted directly into an entry that had already been typed, as evident from the typescript for the entry dated 13<sup>th</sup> February 1965 in which Vaughan had already split a paragraph during the typing stage before annotating with biro in the gap between, 'insert: the following page'; although that page could not be found in Tate's archive, we know from the published volume that it contained the material quoting from 'D. Laing', likely R. D. Laing (*J&D*, pp.207-8). There is even an instance in which Vaughan, clearly dissatisfied with the two-and-a-half-page transcript headed 'December 4<sup>th</sup> 1945', has crossed through all of the typed text with a diagonal line in biro and affixed to the first page a white piece of paper with the notice, 'Insert shortened version from W. Catalogue (Dec 4, 1946) – wrongly dated'<sup>5</sup>, under which in red pen he has written, 'copy to follow'. Indeed, Vaughan's edits for the published journal entries appearing in the 1962 Whitechapel exhibition catalogue provided a significant amount of material for *Journal & Drawings* and no doubt made Vaughan's editorial task markedly less difficult than it may have been. The typescripts have plenty of dates from 1948 into the 1950s that are accompanied not by a typed text of the entry but by the notice in parentheses, 'insert from W. catalogue.' There is one typescript page that consists of only six dates aligned on the

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<sup>5</sup> The question remains as to why Vaughan had wrongly attributed this entry to 1946 in the 1962 Whitechapel exhibition catalogue.

left of the page and notices in red type to import versions that had already been revised and published elsewhere: the dates ‘August 30<sup>th</sup> 1958’, ‘December 25<sup>th</sup> 1958’, and ‘December 29<sup>th</sup> 1958’ are grouped together with the notice, ‘insert from W. catalogue’; the date ‘January 23<sup>rd</sup> 1959’ is accompanied by the notice, ‘insert Atlantic Crossing from London Magazine vol.2 no.4’ (with a note in biro clarifying, ‘1500 words’); and the dates ‘March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1959’ and ‘March 20<sup>th</sup> 1959’ are accompanied once again by, ‘insert from W. catalogue’. It is clear from the typescripts that by this stage in Vaughan’s re-reading and revision of the journal he was adept at collating his material from the original journal manuscripts and other published versions to shape his narrative. The next section of this chapter looks to *Journal & Drawings* to analyse the narrative shaped by Vaughan’s selections and sequencing of material.

## ii. Shaping the Text

Vaughan’s typescripts provide valuable insights into the processes by which he re-read and revised individual journal entries. But his typescripts cannot reveal how he designed the overall narrative of *Journal & Drawings*; only by consulting the published edition can we appreciate how he shaped the text through careful selection and extensive editing in order to tell his story. Before this section examines the published edition it is necessary first of all to consider which stories of Keith Vaughan had been in circulation around the art world and the wider public. A notably private man and a somewhat measured, reserved presence at social gatherings, he was not the kind of figure who attracted speculation, fuelled gossip, or became the subject of anecdote. Any insights into his origins as an artist and development into a successful painter were to be gleaned from such sources as the journal entries that had already been published, the 1962 interview conducted by Patrick Proctor for the BBC’s Russian Service, the 1963 radio interview by Tony Carter, and his segment in Barber’s *Conversations with Painters* (1964). Even with his continued insistence on the importance of a state of tension in his practice, the prevailing account of Vaughan and in particular Vaughan at work was simply that of an articulate and measured professional who, over time, had become ever more proficient in his chosen medium. Such an account hardly does justice to the years of reading, writing, and romantic myth-making during which Vaughan committed to his self-construction as an outsider who would become an intellectual and an artist.

1965 saw the publication of *Private View*, a lavishly appointed volume compiled by Bryan Robertson, John Russell, and Lord Snowdon that promised to be 'a new kind of book about a new situation' – nothing less than 'the first book ever to tell how London became, with Paris and New York, one of the world's three capitals of art'.<sup>6</sup> This story of London's vibrant contemporary art scene was told through profiles of its key and emerging artists accompanied by photographs and quality colour reproductions of representative works. The profile of Vaughan contributed by Robertson offers an example of the kind of biographical account that Vaughan may have sought to correct with the publication of his *Journal & Drawings*. Robertson's text on Vaughan, appearing opposite reproductions of two of his paintings and above a colour photo of the recumbent artist puffing contentedly on a cigarette, conveys an overall impression at odds with Vaughan's own emphasis on individual struggle. While Robertson does clarify that Vaughan is '[s]elf-taught', and while he does acknowledge his commitment to a position 'outside and beyond fashions in art', the image he presents of Vaughan is predominantly one of 'laconic, unfussed directness' while his work is appraised as having gained a stabilizing 'eloquence'.<sup>7</sup> In conjunction with the photo of Vaughan in carefree repose Robertson's text fails to fully address the boldness of the wilder compositions exhibited the previous year and the extent of Vaughan's enquiry into the human form, opting instead for an image of competence and contentedness that hardly places Vaughan near the vanguard of contemporary art. When we look to the profile of Patrick Procktor in *Private View*, again written by Robertson, we find an artist who is 'sharp-witted' and 'intellectually both serious and well versed', an artist who is alive to 'the tragedies' of life and on an 'incessant quest for information' whilst proving himself 'unusually self-sufficient'; aside from the emphasis on Procktor's 'gregarious' nature and 'out-going sociability', Robertson's account here of a restless and insatiable intellect was exactly the kind of impassioned appraisal that Vaughan would have felt himself due.<sup>8</sup>

Vaughan's preface to *Journal & Drawings* prepares the reader for a narrative that foregrounds his precarious beginnings and introduces a suspenseful sense of jeopardy into the account of his developing into an artist. He describes himself at age twenty-seven being faced with 'what then seemed the likelihood of imminent extinction before I had properly got started', with his journal commenced

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<sup>6</sup> Bryan Robertson, John Russell, Lord Snowdon, *Private View* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1965), inside front dustjacket.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.107

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p.250

as ‘an attempt to analyse and understand a state of total confusion and defeat’ (*J&D*, p.7). The following sentence is carefully calibrated to entice the reader with the expectation of that heroic kind of narrative in which an exceptional young man develops in difficult circumstances: ‘The people I knew then were mostly too concerned with actively getting involved with things to have much time for inner states of mind, and in any case I tended to form passionate relationships rather than mature and stable ones.’ Here Vaughan conveys his exceptionality amongst his peers (thanks to his awareness of and access to ‘inner states of mind’) whilst maintaining a degree of humility by implying that his inner life can now be regarded as somewhat of an indulgence. The promise of ‘passionate relationships’ to be recounted also prepares his reader for the centrality of high emotions to his story and further feeds the expectation for an artist’s origin myth. The first two paragraphs of Vaughan’s preface skilfully balance the allusion to his talents with a sobering dose of humility; he sends a journal extract to the editor of *Penguin New Writing* ‘on the chance suggestion of a friend’ and it is received ‘with sympathy and encouragement’ and to his ‘amazement’ published. Vaughan also emphasizes the importance of the wartime environment in which his journal-writing first developed, mentioning ‘the army’ (but, interestingly, neglecting to mention that he was a non-combatant) three times. Robertson’s profile had not mentioned this crucial formative phase but Vaughan’s preface establishes its importance in providing the kind of framework and order that could foster his ‘introspection’. Statements to this effect explain to the reader the weight given to the journal’s wartime entries (occupying, as they do, half the book), for this was the period in which ‘was effected the transition from an anonymous private chrysalis to a damp, bewildered but public moth’. Vaughan overplays his public visibility in this phrase but successfully establishes his story, albeit via the most heavy-handed of metaphors, as one of transformation and the self-aware struggle that ensues. The allusions to his exceptionality are balanced with humble disclaimers to create a kind of tension that tells the reader this will be a story of consciousness in conflict.

Vaughan’s preface continues by explaining his process of selecting material from the journal’s forty-eight volumes and his aim ‘to hold a reasonable balance between repetitious introspection and objective recording’. While any suggestion of journal-writing being ‘objective’ is, of course, highly disingenuous, Vaughan’s distinction between these two broad categories of writing lets his reader know to expect passages that comment on contemporary scenes, events, and attitudes, thus situating Vaughan’s personal growth in a changing social and political climate. He stresses his commitment to honesty in the published selection that follows: ‘I have



not suppressed opinions I no longer hold, or attitudes of mind which are now embarrassing, if they seem true of their time.’ This skilfully balanced disclaimer professes a lack of vanity in his approach to self-editorship whilst nevertheless informing the reader that a highly subjective process of self-editorship has been practiced in deciding what material seems to ring ‘true’. The editorial mandate for honesty that Vaughan offers here is not one that entails pure unexpurgated, unabridged reproduction of material – which, in fairness, would not have been possible given the impossibility of reproducing the entire journal verbatim – but one that focuses on whether material can now be appreciated as representative. Most interesting of all is the disclaimer that follows and its suggestion that there is material of an unpublishable nature in the original journal manuscripts: ‘I have omitted passages which would clearly be offensive to other people (as against merely rude) and those which would be better confined to an analyst’s consulting room.’ The word ‘offensive’ is key here because it communicates to the perceptive reader that certain material may literally be an offence to publish; this disclaimer thus offers a codified suggestion of his homosexuality by invoking the possibility of incrimination by full disclosure. His preface certainly stops short of the kind of statement he made in the original journal entry dated 24<sup>th</sup> August 1965, in which he claims during the self-editing process to have ‘excluded all mention of sex, auto or homo, which means only about 1/10 of the journal is used’ (J47, p.79).

If only in a codified manner, it was important that Vaughan should make his homosexuality apparent to the reader of *Journal & Drawings*. A year prior to his task of self-editorship he had described in his journal an evening with his friend Patrick Woodcock and their conversation concerning the candour of personal journals; Vaughan had maintained that honesty meant telling ‘everything one could about one’s self, however sordid or shaming’, while Patrick thought that the art of conscious selection was more important as people could presume all that ‘seamy side’ (26.09.64; J46, p.16). Vaughan had admitted ‘a prying curiosity about people’s secrets’ before telling Patrick of ‘the very real benefit & satisfaction’ he has gleaned from ‘psycho-analytic case histories’ that offer the ‘reassurance one is not more odd than others’. While *Journal & Drawings* could not contain the explicit details of his homosexual liaisons and autoerotic experimentation, it was Vaughan’s very sincere hope that the published selection of his own self-analytical journal would similarly offer reassurance to a gay male reader. This was the way in which Vaughan gauged his engagement with a gay readership – by presenting himself as a sensitive and often reticent figure. He had commented on how ‘to join the gay world has always been impossible’ and how he had ‘never been that sort of queer’ (18.07.65; J47,

p.55). In contrast to a new friend who claimed to be a 'pro' at frequenting gay clubs, Vaughan thought himself disconnected from the vibrancy and variety of gay life in mid-1960s London ('I patronize only the White Bear which is considered the lowest level of that world'; 20.07.65; J47, p.56). He was nevertheless incensed when he felt that gay life was being misrepresented, as when he savaged 'Isherwood's novel' in a 1962 entry for being untruthful ('April 10, 11 or 12'; J43, p.37).<sup>9</sup> Vaughan knew that, unlike such raconteurs as one-time associate John Lehmann (whose second volume of his autobiography, *I Am My Brother* (1960), Vaughan alludes to; 18.04.62; J43, p.41), he was not a confident voice speaking from the epicentre of the gay intellectual experience. Instead, he knew that his best way of allowing a reader to identify with his experiences was by being cautious whilst suggesting that more in-depth material can be found, likely posthumously, in the original manuscripts.

During the period in which he self-edited the published edition Vaughan did not make reference in his journal to any life-writing by gay male authors that may have influenced his attempts to shape a narrative of his own experience. If he was going to communicate to a gay male audience (not his sole intention but, as explained above, wholly necessary) then it had to be by emphasizing the journal's account of the growth of a sensitive, artistically inclined young man. When Weatherhead describes Spender's *World Within World* (1951), he describes the presence of 'a mortified Stephen Spender who has failed to negotiate the icy curves of human relationships', a man who frequently experiences 'the breakdown or the quiet failure of his engagement with others'<sup>10</sup>; Weatherhead's words here could just as easily be an assessment of the situation presented by Vaughan in *Journal & Drawings*. If, decades since he first read the poet's life-writing, Vaughan was still looking to Spender to provide a model for the literary presentation of the outsider experience, then it is once again the 'September Journal' that exerted the strongest influence, with Vaughan's first ever journal entry – dated 25<sup>th</sup> August 1939 and therefore written before Spender's first entry – appearing in *Journal & Drawings* in a severely abridged version (cut from over 1,400 words to a little over 300) that cuts straight to the kind of statement of personal crisis with which Spender's first entry began. Vaughan's first ever entry as it appears in *Journal & Drawings* only uses material from page eight onwards of the original thirteen-page entry – beginning with a reworked version of the original's sentence, 'I have endeavoured all my life to find my own solution [...]' (J1, p.8 / J&D, p.11) – and distils this material into a

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<sup>9</sup> Yorke asserts that the novel, unnamed in Vaughan's journal entry, was in fact *Down There on a Visit* (1962); Yorke, p.209

<sup>10</sup> Weatherhead, p.23

précis of Vaughan's anxieties and insecurities as he embarked upon writing a journal. Because any reader will recognize the significance of such a date in Summer of 1939, Vaughan has seen fit to remove the original's first seven pages of context relating to the impending war and his disagreement with the value placed on physical, war-going courageousness; his conscientious objection, as with his homosexuality, is nevertheless very much there to be inferred from his opposition to the 'prevailing standards' of the day, his having 'refrained from accepting many doctrines', and the general impression of isolation at this time. The published version of the first entry pieces together sentences from pages eight to thirteen of the original entry (constituting just over half of those pages' content) into two small paragraphs of continuous prose with no editorial ellipses to indicate there having been cuts to the original text. With the one notable exception of Vaughan's reference to sexual relationships and prior promiscuity no material cut from these pages in the original would have added any further nuance. The sentences themselves have been shorn of any extraneous words or repetitions and reworked grammatically. The material that constitutes the final paragraph in the original entry is all used and adapted as Vaughan closes the published version of the entry. The edited version of Vaughan's first ever journal entry that appears in *Journal & Drawings* offers an example of his skill at contracting the original journal's material in order to create a clear, concise scene within his narrative – in this case the establishment of the 'state of total confusion and defeat' to which his preface had alluded. Further examples of this skill are to be found in Vaughan's edits of the subsequent selections from August and September 1939; these entries have been cut to expose their core statements of isolation, dread, and social awkwardness and so convey his position outside normative male society (*J&D*, pp.11-3).

While Vaughan contracted certain journal entries in order to focus on a particular scene or emotional snapshot for the purposes of narrative continuity, he also redistributed many passages of material from certain entries and attributed them to dates that differ from those to which they correspond in the original journal. One such instance is his decision to divide the original journal entry dated 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1943 into the two entries that appear in *Journal & Drawings* under the dates '3 July 1943' and '4 July 1943' – the latter being a date for which there is not an entry in the original journal (his next entry following the 3<sup>rd</sup> was dated 7<sup>th</sup> July). The original entry dated 3<sup>rd</sup> July was a draft of a letter addressed to Bill that recounted a train journey north with the Non-Combatant Corps (*J16*, pp.23-7). It is possible that Vaughan felt it more representative to split this entry and apportion part of it to the following day if that was his recollection of how and when it was written.

Nevertheless, dividing the material in this way has allowed him to shape a more distinct narrative in which one entry addresses the subject of the sadness of departures while the other depicts the discomfort and uncertainty of arrivals, thus making this journey more of a milestone and a worthy introduction to the third part of *Journal & Drawings* that begins with these two entries. In the published entry dated '3 July 1943', Vaughan has elaborated and expanded upon the material in the original entry with the second paragraph containing extended musings on the pain of parting from friends who have been transferred between units and the toll of travelling around the country with the Corps (*J&D*, p.63). The published entry also includes descriptions of the passing towns, cities, and countryside that have been substantially re-written. In the original entry, having deemed Sheffield to be 'bleak and sinister' and described the features of its industrial landscape, Vaughan had wrote, 'There is defiant strength here.' (p.25) In *Journal & Drawings* this passage, already reworded to add extra baroque flourishes to the spectacle, offers a quite different and more grandiose statement: 'There is something reassuring about the final victory of machinery over nature. The conflict no longer counts for anything.' (p.64) In this revised version Vaughan's observations seem to penetrate to the heart of some truth about the modern world and the changes it has wrought whilst employing such a loaded term as 'conflict' in a wartime context. There is a further addition whereby the published entry '3 July 1943' concludes with a quote from Auden's 1937 poem 'Spain' ('Our day is our loss. O show us History, the operator, the organizer. Time the refreshing river.') that is not present in the original journal entry or anywhere else in the original journal manuscript (*J&D*, p.66). By splitting the original entry dated 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1943 into two entries Vaughan is able to make the observations (and the newly-added evidence of his reading of Auden) that constitute '3 July 1943' resonate more as the discoveries of a new and forbidding environment shaped by the currents of history; and all this before '4 July 1943', which contains the original entry's more prosaic material on the austere appearance of northern houses from the train and the arrival and inspection of the men before they assemble their makeshift beds (*J&D*, pp.66-7).

Vaughan's most commonly used technique for shaping the original text into the narrative of *Journal & Drawings* was the merging of material from two or more original entries into a single entry under a single date or heading (with no indication of this practice given to the reader). One example is the entry that appears under the deliberately vague date 'August 1943' (the first of two entries with this date in *Journal & Drawings*) which consists of material brought together from the original entries dated 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> July 1943 (*J16*, pp.33-41 & pp.42-3). The entry dated 24<sup>th</sup>

July contains an account of Vaughan venturing on foot and by bus into the countryside and searching for a place to take tea. The same entry continues with Vaughan's thoughts on the practice of automatic writing and an enquiry into the social causes of totalitarianism; the material on these subjects does not appear in *Journal & Drawings*, with the first entry dated 'August 1943' (*J&D*, pp.67-70) containing only the account of Vaughan's countryside trip and then continuing with a description of watching pairs of people in rowing boats that appeared in the original entry dated 31<sup>st</sup> July. In combining material from these two original entries Vaughan has created a picaresque narrative that ends on a whimsical note as his own loneliness is implied by the fading light of the afternoon and his unceremonious departure from the scene. In several notable instances Vaughan merged material into single entries not to conflate evocative scenes but to combine phrases that neatly summarized his emotional state during periods of doubt and insecurity. He took material from the original entries dated 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> March 1946, merged them, and attributed them to the former date to create a paragraph-long entry consisting of short, stark phrases that communicate his lack of direction upon demobilization (*J&D*, p.111). Sequenced to follow a two-page entry that considers the possible aftermath of the war, relays some observations of Eden Camp, and suggests that mankind is not inherently evil but benevolent, this newly merged entry strikes a contrast that fits Vaughan's narrative for *Journal & Drawings* whereby his more philosophical musings clash with his crippling bouts of self-doubt. Given that this entry closes part four of *Journal & Drawings*, it is understandable that Vaughan would have deliberated over its content and looked to bring together the material from the original journal that seemed most effective in ending part four on an emotional cliff-hanger. Elsewhere, when in need of an entry that succinctly communicated the value of his struggle as an artist, Vaughan combined material from four different entries in the original journal (dated 28<sup>th</sup> June, 29<sup>th</sup> June, 8<sup>th</sup> July, and 28<sup>th</sup> July 1960) in order to create a single entry dated '28 June 1960' that seamlessly integrates material on, respectively, (i) the irritation of being directed to certain sights by well-meaning travelling companions, (ii) his use of a quote attributed to Ruskin<sup>11</sup> to contextualize some thoughts on abstract painting, (iii) his own current work on some large charcoal drawings, and (iv) the perpetual difficulty of holding 'a steady course' in the 'never ending struggle to get the best out of oneself' (*J&D*, p.176). In this instance Vaughan has merged material into a single

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<sup>11</sup> On the value of watching a flower as it grows instead of simply subjecting it to dissection or magnification. Vaughan attributes the quote in the original entry 29<sup>th</sup> June (but not in *Journal & Drawings*) to Ruskin's *Praeterita* (1885-89).

entry that combines personal anecdote, art theory, and details of his own practice to convey the totality of his living as an artist.

In addition to merging material in order to create a stronger scene or argument within an individual entry, Vaughan also re-sequenced entries from the original journal to create new sequences of entries that formed an argument within his larger narrative. The best example of this is Vaughan's heavy editing of three original journal entries written during June 1944 to produce four entries that appear in *Journal & Drawings* with much of their material now assigned to different dates. In the original journal, the sequence ran as follows: the entry dated 1<sup>st</sup> June contained Vaughan's response to a film that depicted an air attack on a village; the entry dated 16<sup>th</sup> June his objection to the casual acceptance of war in the public's perception and how it is often trivialized as a contest or game; and the entry dated 20<sup>th</sup> June his thoughts on the logistics and strategies of war, the 'average Nazi', and the Gestapo chief executed in the Kharkov trials. The sequence in the published edition, however, runs as follows: an entry dated '16 June 1944' that corresponds to 16<sup>th</sup> June in the original but is notably more concise; an entry dated '20 June 1944' that corresponds to 20<sup>th</sup> June (again with significant cuts and rephrasing) but only to the first half of that original entry; an entry dated '22 June 1944' that corresponds to the entry dated 1<sup>st</sup> June; and an entry dated '24 June 1944' that corresponds to the second half of the original entry 20<sup>th</sup> June (*J&D*, pp.84-93). The typescripts of these four entries show that Vaughan made many corrections at the typing stage and then continued to make further corrections by annotating them in biro. An example of this would be in the very first sentence of 16<sup>th</sup> June; whereas in the original entry the 'suffering in the war' has become 'an everyday affair' (J21, p.28), in the typescript it is 'a perfectly natural way of living' until Vaughan's annotations in biro, having amended 'suffering' to 'destruction', remove the 'perfectly' and change 'living' to 'life' – corrections that proceed to the published version (*J&D*, p.84). There are some whole sentences struck through with a line in biro on the typescript and a large number of individual word choices amended in biro. All three entries that follow in this sequence have been subjected to the same extent of correction in biro on their typescripts. The typescript for 22<sup>nd</sup> June, which as stated above is based on material from the original entry dated 1<sup>st</sup> June, shows that Vaughan had already in the typing stage chosen to omit the fact that the scene of the air attack happened in a film that 'seemed so very nearly authentic' (O1.06.44; J21, p.21). Then, in black ink, he has added to the typescript (in a bubble in the top right-hand corner of the page that points with an arrow to its place after the enumeration of the alleged casualties), 'The whole thing was photographed by one of the ~~plains~~ planes

and we saw it in a newsreel this evening', a claim that proceeds to the published version (*J&D*, p.87). Consistent with the change from this footage having been a fictional representation, he had already changed whilst typing, judging from second page of 22<sup>nd</sup> June typescript, the originally typed 'absurd people' scattering in fear (01.06.44; J21, p.23) to the more sympathetic 'tiny figures'. In the typescript of 24<sup>th</sup> June the second paragraph is material seemingly added at the typing stage on the sympathetic account of a prisoner at Eden Camp (an executioner who had been stationed in France) accompanied by a quote from Arthur Koestler – material that has no source anywhere in the original journal manuscript. These alterations and additions of material, in conjunction with the redistribution of material across dates, produces a new sequence that presents Vaughan's humanitarian perspective by offering a compelling argument that moves from the public's perception of war, to its strategic reality, to the real cost of civilian casualties and then finally to the question of whether individuals (even if they are Nazis or former executioners) can ever be held fully accountable. A further example of the effects achieved by Vaughan's re-sequencing of entries can be found in the narrative formed by five published entries dated '16', '20', '21', '22', and '27 October 1944' (*J&D*, pp.97-100) that redistributes material from the original entries dated 16<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup> October 1944, plus the original entry dated 4<sup>th</sup> May 1945. Having evidently deliberated over their placement, judging from the transcript that originally ascribed this material dates in mid-May 1945, Vaughan eventually shaped in these five published entries a narrative in which the character studies of people at Eden Camp, each of whom was from a different background but nevertheless affected by wartime circumstances, create a gallery of portraits dedicated to everyday humanity that contrasts with the final entry's consideration of the attention afforded to the death of Princess Beatrice – a figure whose cosseted life and 'own special death' represent unfathomable privilege (*J&D*, p.100).

Outside of such narratives-within-the-narrative, there are instances in which single published entries appear under dates that do not correspond to the single original journal entries to which their content corresponds. When looking at the example of the published entry dated '5 March 1944' (*J&D*, p.78), an abridged version of the original entry dated 5<sup>th</sup> March 1946 (having omitted its two concluding paragraphs), there is little evidence provided by the surrounding entries in the new chronology to suggest why Vaughan moved it forward by two years. Its subject is Vaughan's consideration of two natural forms, the oyster shell and sandstone, and their metaphorical significance as, respectively, symbols of increasing insularity ('All writers of introspective journals should bear this in mind')

and ‘endless weary repetition’. Its subject matter does not really provide any compelling context for or contrast with the entries preceding (on the genealogy of the artistic temperament through art history) or following it (on how Vaughan, unlike those around him in the army, seems to lack another life awaiting him outside of present situation). We must therefore assume that Vaughan simply thought the original entry dated 5<sup>th</sup> March 1946 a fine piece of writing that he wished to include but that wouldn’t fall neatly into its original place chronologically given that part four of *Journal & Drawings* closes with the despairing entry dated ‘15 March 1946’ which relies upon the temporal distance from its preceding entry, dated ‘31 December 1945’, in order to convey (as discussed above) the extent of Vaughan’s floundering upon demobilization. However an instance of changed dates such as the published entry dated ‘25 December 1948’, a condensed version of the original entry dated 25<sup>th</sup> December 1949, has a clearer intention. In this entry Vaughan speculates, with regards to his housemate John Minton, that ‘Johnny’s use of life might be compared to a Tibetan’s use of a prayer wheel’ in its use of speedy revolutions to sustain itself before implying that ‘in striving for what one believes to be the best’ he meanwhile ‘gets overlooked by contemporary life’ (*J&D*, pp.114-6). Sequenced between the entry dated ‘15 December 1948’ – in which Vaughan fears the fraudulence of performing socially to gain approval – and the entry dated ‘29 December 1948’ – which begins, ‘What angers me about X is the impossible demand to reconcile that besotted wreck of a man with a painter whose work has power, control and sensibility’, and which continues by lambasting a lack of discipline whilst asserting the responsibilities of being an artist (*J&D*, p.116) – we understand Vaughan to be compiling material that communicates to the reader his commitment to conducting himself as an artist with integrity.

It is important to consider where in *Journal & Drawings* we find material that has no apparent source in the original journal manuscript and what effects Vaughan achieves via its inclusion. On occasion he adds what we must assume is a newly invented element to an existing situation. In the published entry dated ‘11 October 1944’, Vaughan adds to the account of the camp being hit by a terrible gale (that we find under the corresponding date in the original journal) two elements without any source in the original journal: a detailed description of new arrivals being processed; and a conversation with one such new arrival who was an architect from Wetzlar (*J&D*, pp.95-7). Their interaction provides an anecdote full of pathos in which the architect is a nervous, fussy man whose prized possession is a pencil, a tool of his trade, that is not allowed at the camp but that Vaughan returns to him regardless. This addition by Vaughan is another instance in which he seeks to



humanize those who were perceived as enemies during wartime; it also directly precedes the sequence of four entries that each offer a different character study before the entry concerning Princess Beatrice's death (as discussed above). That the second page of the three-page typescript of this entry is almost entirely unaltered, save for four minor corrections, suggests that either Vaughan invented this material as he typed or was transcribing and embedding pre-written material that had a source outside of the journal<sup>12</sup>. There are some entries in *Journal & Drawings* that bear very little resemblance to material appearing in the original journal manuscript and that therefore seem to have been newly written. In such cases as the published entry dated '24 Jan 1959' – the account of Vaughan's voyage by boat to North America that spans five pages (*J&D*, pp.151-5) and unfolds completely differently to the account given in the original entries (23<sup>rd</sup> Jan to 30<sup>th</sup> Jan; *J40*, pp.53-71) – the absence of a corresponding typed text in favour of a parenthetical note on the typescript, 'insert Atlantic Crossing from London Magazine vol.2 no.4', tells us that Vaughan already felt he had written an improved version which could easily be employed again. Despite having no discernible source in the original journal manuscript, the published entry dated '25 July 1959' – which covers Vaughan's response to John Berger's comments on Romantic art in the *New Statesman* – at least has an identifiable basis in their spat conducted via the letters page of *The Spectator*. While it is certainly misleading for Vaughan to present such material as if part of the original journal's text, it is at least material representative of events and conversations known to have taken place at their respective times.

Yet there are some entire entries in *Journal & Drawings* for which there is no apparent source, leading us to assume that they were written entirely anew, invented even, for publication. The published entry dated '1 August 1945' bears no resemblance to the original entry under the corresponding date in which Vaughan lists an itinerary of recent activities (*J26*, pp.3-4); instead, we find in *Journal & Drawings* the unfolding of such idyllic scenes at Eden Camp as the joke shared between a German gardener and a guard and the arrival from the fields of lorries full of bronzed men who were but a year prior 'hollowed out shadows' (pp.107-8). These scenes, which have no source anywhere in the original journal, serve to add to the argument of Vaughan's hopes for a new world of post-war peace. Another instance in which completely different material appears in the place of an original entry can be found under the date '4 October 1959'; here Vaughan replaces his amused speculation as to how many lauded masterpieces were no more than the erotic

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<sup>12</sup> Perhaps from a version of this entry already prepared for his 1962 Whitechapel catalogue.

fantasies of their creators (J42, p.96) with a short passage, prefaced by a quote from 'K.C.', Kenneth Clark, on Vermeer, addressing a technical point on the relations of figures in a painting (*J&D*, p.170). It is understandable that, immediately following the entry in which Vaughan objects to Berger's views on the necessary social utility of art, he would have wanted to make a more conventionally respectable point as regards art history. There are also newly invented entries that appear in *Journal & Drawings* under dates to which there was never an original entry attributed. The content of the published entry dated '22 January 1944', in which Vaughan discusses the advertised vision of post-war air travel and his doubts as to whether it will truly connect the world as promised (*J&D*, p.74), does not have any source in the original (neither is there an entry dated 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1944 in the original manuscript). The rationale behind the insertion of this newly invented material becomes clearer in the context of the entry dated '24 February 1944' that immediately follows and that predicts a breakdown of the deception, or 'The Lie', under which people currently live, prophesying 'the cracks will appear after the war' (*J&D*, pp.74-5). Vaughan's diatribe against a commercialized vision of utopia in the published entry '22 January 1944', likely written with a great deal of hindsight many years after the date to which it is attributed, presents him as sagaciously predicting post-war discord. The published journal entry '20 September 1945' also offers a warning about the post-war climate while corresponding to no existing date or corresponding material anywhere in the original journal manuscript. In this entry Vaughan notes how the ostensibly novel sight of a street lamp ('it must have been five years since I saw the last') did not surprise him as it should have done but instead quickly closed the gap of intervening time and became just another reminder of 'habit'; he extrapolates from this personal anecdote a warning against the return to pre-war habits, to 'taking everything for granted', before using the lamp as a metaphor and suggesting that there will no longer be a clearly defined light and dark in this uncertain new world (*J&D*, p.108). The typescript for this entry suggests that this last point was especially laboured over considering that a paragraph beginning, 'The lights go on again', was completely struck through in biro and seemingly redrafted directly below in a paragraph beginning, 'The lights go on'.

The narrative presented by the wartime entries selected for publication combines Vaughan's introspective writings on his social awkwardness, his commentaries on unfolding events, and his responses to others' opinions (arising from conversation or his reading), to take the reader through his awkward beginnings as an outsider to his position of perceptive commentator at Eden Camp. Despite Vaughan's addition of material with no source in the original manuscript,

the narrative of *Journal & Drawings* stays true to the course of the original journal; after his interactions with various people at the camp succeed in giving war a cast of human faces, and after the V. E. Day celebrations suggest that war has in fact won and that Vaughan's apprehensions about the post-war world may be right, the narrative loses focus just as the journal lost purpose as its writer embarked upon his budding artistic career. Part five of *Journal & Drawings*, the longest at fifty-five pages, covers the period 1948-59 and devotes itself to accounts of Vaughan's trips abroad, again much as the original journal did considering it was only in these years picked up as a travelling companion. The material covering his explorations around France in 1951 spans seven pages and there is also a condensed account of a further trip to France dated '16 July 1955' (but originally appearing under multiple dates in July 1956 and therefore moved forward one year). The years 1956 to 1958, including a paragraph-long entry on visiting Madrid, are skipped through in a few short pages and therefore reflect the paucity of journal-writing at this time.

*Journal & Drawings* finds a purpose again, as Vaughan's original journal did, with the voyage to the Americas. The five-page published entry covering his journey by boat introduces us to a cast of radically different characters and situations to those in the original entries written as he crossed the Atlantic (*J&D*, pp.151-5). His residency at Iowa is skipped over almost entirely, with only one short entry that relates a conversation about buying a car before another short entry covering Vaughan's subsequent bus journey south through the United States (*J&D*, pp.155-6). Of all things it is his time in Mexico that is afforded space in *Journal & Drawings* (pp.161-6), which is initially surprising considering that his time there was defined by a highly incriminating chain of events: his meeting and cavorting with Raul, the young Mexican with whom he would maintain a correspondence for years after. For his published account of events, he removes the context of his arrival in Mexico – specifically his having absconded with a young student he met at Iowa named Edward who then, according to Vaughan, broke down emotionally and returned home early. It is evident from the typescript that Vaughan added a few extra phrases in biro to his typed text to communicate the naivety, and therefore relative innocence, of his relationship with Raul; such annotations that proceeded to the published edition (pp.164-5) include his reference to 'my beautiful & charming little Mexican friend' and two instances in which he emphasizes the lack of conversation and therefore verbal understanding between them<sup>13</sup> (which may have

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<sup>13</sup> Vaughan added to the typescript the following sentence: 'With effort we might exchange 10 sentences of conversation in the course of a day. For hours on end we would say nothing & neither

been intended to dispel any notion that Raul had been coerced). And yet there is still plenty of material in the published account of his time with Raul in Mexico that offers by far the clearest and most incriminating evidence of his homosexuality and particular attachment to very young men. The question as to why Vaughan saw fit to include this material is perhaps answered by the last sentence of the published entry dated 'New York 29 June 1959', an entry that covers the last leg of his journey around North and Central America and that closes part five of *Journal & Drawings*. Having begun with material relating to the sweltering city conditions with its source in the original entry that corresponds to this date, Vaughan has chosen to close this entry with a paragraph that takes as its starting point a quotation from Goethe's *Den Vereinigten Staaten* (1827) originally appearing in the original entry dated 1<sup>st</sup> July 1959, 'Amerika du hast es besser?', that he repurposes from its original context in that entry (relating to America having 'better built young men with larger genitals than Europe'; J42, p.60) to instead preface a critique of America as an illusion of progress ('A flashy veneer conceals your lack of feathers'; J&D, p.167). In his final sentence he makes a declaration with no source in the original journal: 'I learnt more of life from the palm of Raul's hand than from all the complicated networks of your glittering highways and supermarkets.' (J&D, p.167) In claiming to have learned so much from his time with Raul, Vaughan offers a double-defence of his homosexuality, at once providing (i) a defence of his brief but enthusiastic association with the young Mexican as formative, and (ii) a defence of an ontology that places at its centre the study of the physical human form as opposed to, for instance, the cosmopolitan consumerism so seductively packaged by New York.

Part six of *Journal & Drawings*, having begun with Vaughan's aforementioned response to Berger, also concludes with a defence of his increasingly unfashionable aesthetic (and, therefore, ontological) interests. The four-page published entry dated 'December 1961' and headed 'Thoughts on Painting' closes with a quote attributed to Kandinsky in which the painter claims, "The impact of an acute triangle on a sphere generates as much emotional impact as the meeting of the figures of God and Adam in Michelangelo's "Creation"", to which Vaughan replies, 'Not to me, boy.' (J&D, p.190) The approach differs in the seventh and final part of *Journal & Drawings*, covering his selection of entries from the years 1962-5, in which Vaughan's defence of his aesthetic and art practice is placed not as bookends but as a centrepiece. Part seven begins with an entry on what Vaughan believes is the public's inability to react to musical performance except by making the display

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was bored.' He also added the clarification that Raul 'did not understand' when he read aloud English phrases from the boy's educational books.

of applause. In this entry, dated '12 March 1962', he argues that such behaviour indicates that art nowadays requires immediate comment and explanation to its audience (*J&D*, p.191). This is followed by three entries each concerned with a particular aesthetic experience: the physically overpowering noise of a jazz club; the spectacle of a railway station; the art and architecture of Rome during a trip in April 1963. This sequence is followed by an entry defending the tastes of the 'sensual man' from the accusations of the Catholic viewpoint and an entry of short, impressionistic descriptions of scenes from a train journey that experiments with a dialogic format and clipped syntax. The latter of these two entries, published under the date '26 May 1963 – King's Cross Station' but based on material appearing under the date 26<sup>th</sup> May 1964, flaunts Vaughan's undimmed powers of observation as he captures the smallest of details as snapshots and speculates on the lives of those seated around him (*J&D*, pp.195-7). Now the reader comes to the centrepiece itself constituting the published entry dated '7 April 1964', which responds to the New Generation exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery (*J&D*, p.198), and two pages of text (with an embedded drawing) entitled 'Some notes on painting – August 1964' (pp.198-201). It is understandable that Vaughan re-sequenced the entry from 26<sup>th</sup> May 1964 to appear exactly a year earlier and therefore before his response to the New Generation exhibition as it offers one more showcase of Vaughan's keen eye. The first paragraph of the published entry '7 April 1964' is based on a single paragraph of material from the original three-page original entry dated 7<sup>th</sup> April 1964 and the second, longer paragraph and concluding quote are based on the original entry dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1964; from the evident efforts he took to merge this material into a single published entry and rewrite the prose to condense his argument, it was clearly important to Vaughan to collect his thoughts on the pop art movement that he felt would not only consign him to being a dinosaur but close down the questing, questioning nature of art itself. This published entry on the New Generation exhibition is immediately followed by the entry 'Some notes on painting' which has no source in original journal but corresponds instead, if we consult Vaughan's handwritten list of publications, to an article with the same name that appeared in the October 1964 edition of the *London Magazine*. Its strategic insertion into *Journal & Drawings* can be appreciated by considering how this piece begins with Vaughan's reflections on his practice as one of solving problems in painting that in turn yields a slow, patient progression of one's abilities. In its second paragraph he neatly summarizes his 'problem' – that is finding 'an image which renders the tactile physical presence of a human being without resorting to the classical techniques of anatomical paraphrase' (*J&D*, p.199). He proceeds by remarking upon the

extraordinariness of possessing a body, the understanding of equilibrium as a balancing of 'antagonistic forces', the distinction between emotional expression and mere emotional discharge, and his own interpretation of the Laocoön myth (pp.200-1). By inserting this material Vaughan creates a centrepiece to the seventh part of *Journal & Drawings* that comments on the facile fashionability of new art whilst restating the eternal problems of the artists, himself included, who truly comprehend their heritage.

With his defence made, the narrative of the seventh part closes out with selections that simply bring Vaughan's story up to date. These entries are all fairly disconnected, consisting of a humorous and nostalgic account of Vaughan revisiting his old school, some quotations from (and passing comments on) such figures as Freud, Georg Lukács, and Ronald Laing, and two consecutive entries expressing Vaughan's admiration for many of the youth of the day (or, as he refers to them, 'Generation X'). Of the autoerotic enquiries that dominated Vaughan's life and journal-writing of this period, the reader receives only a glimpse in the published entry dated '25 March 1965' which postulates the fundamental struggle between eros and entropy (*J&D*, pp.208-9) and the opening of the first of several entries covering a trip to North Africa in which he speculates that some writers (amongst them Julien Green and Gide) are prudish in not writing on masturbation (pp.209-10). After the account of his African trip, *Journal & Drawings* draws to a close with three final entries that together act as a depressive coda that conveys Vaughan's discomfort with the trappings of ostensible success and ends on a note that confirms his own unsettled state and extrapolates from that his fears for the wider world. The entry dated '15 June 1965' reflects on his CBE and the expectations others have of you once you are deemed successful (*J&D*, p.214). The next entry, dated '9 August 1965', describes the physical 'symptoms' of being in love before suggesting that the physical 'conjunction of love' is only necessary 'to replenish the reservoirs of memory' so that the fantasy world of loving in absence may be restored (p.214). The final entry in *Journal & Drawings*, dated '17 August 1965', begins, 'One's hold on life these days is tenuous.' (p.216) He comments on the suddenness of death as experienced by people all over the world before acknowledging that one day people will read about his death. To the material from the original entry with the corresponding date Vaughan has added a literary flourish by alluding to Proust's character Mme Verdurin when imagining the general indifference with which the coffee-sipping public will read of his demise. Whereas the original entry concluded, 'This is difficult for someone whose tendency has always been to lay up treasures upon the earth' (*J47*, p.78), the published entry closes instead with the ominous

words, 'This is difficult when one is accustomed to living on the natural assumption that there will be a future.' Having assembled through self-editorship the account of himself as a sensitive outsider and thoughtful commentator who constantly struggled with philosophical questions, Vaughan takes the opportunity in this final sequence of entries to offer a counterpoint to any image of him as a figure who is comfortable with his life, work, and success.

### iii. Placing the Image

In Vaughan's preface to *Journal & Drawings* he makes it clear that he was given full creative control over the selection and placement of the images that accompany the text. 'It is the heroic policy of my publisher', he declares, 'that this conglomeration of words and images should be the undiluted and unaccompanied work of one person.' (p.8) In the journal entries written concurrently with its production Vaughan reveals the importance he placed on the appearance of the self-edited edition; he remarks that, despite his general 'sense of unease' at its impending publication, he is looking forward to the 'visual physical presence of the book' (29.09.66; J48, p.45), and a few days later, having just seen the first copy 'off the press at Shenval', comments, 'Looks all right. Visually. Nothing to be ashamed of.' (04.10.66; J48, p.48) While this may seem like faint praise, his reference made to not feeling 'ashamed' is significant if we consider how Vaughan had admitted that his 'flesh creeps' at the thought of 'some of the things disclosed' in *Journal & Drawings* (29.09.66; p.45), and how above all the published edition was to push candour to the limits of what was comfortable. In his preface he explains that he has 'selected the drawings from the many hundreds that exist' and that his selection policy involved choosing 'those which were done from the same direct, informal and compulsive urge as the journal entries themselves' (J&D, p.8). In emphasizing the confluence of 'urge' in his production of both words and images, Vaughan encourages the reader to consider a common well-spring of spontaneous creativity. His wish for this relationship to be clear is evident when he comments on his television appearance on the BBC, aired 6<sup>th</sup> November 1966, to discuss *Journal & Drawings*: 'Drawings displayed with considerable understanding & sympathy, albeit [sic] implying a relation to the text which was not accurate.' (08.11.66; J48, p.56) In his reflections upon the programme he also responds to the sight of his own face on television, which appeared to him like a cross between that of the West German chancellor and 'a

stranded prehistoric jelly-fish'. He believes that this spectacle will finally end his delusion that he can be romantically involved with younger men as it now renders the idea comical and repellent. While these comments are made humorously, they suggest that the publication of his self-edited journal had now fixed his image in the eyes of the public and in his own eyes, thus constituting a significant threshold crossed.

Any analysis of Vaughan's placement of images in *Journal & Drawings* must begin with the photographs taken on Pagham beach in the 1930s. The book begins with a double-page reproduction preceding its title page and closes with another double-page reproduction (pp.2-3 & pp.220-1). Single-page reproductions appear in part one of the book on five consecutive pages with one further reproduction on the penultimate page (pp.15-9 & p.39). The Pagham pictures are the only photographs by Vaughan to appear in the book, yet his preface seems to downplay their centrality to his narrative of emotional development, offering them instead as helpful illustrations included at a friend's suggestion. He relates how it was 'only in 1962' when he showed these photographs to Bryan Robertson 'that it was immediately apparent to him that this was the source or one of the sources of the Assemblies of Figures on which I was working during the fifties and sixties'. Vaughan remarks that he was inclined to agree although he 'certainly never referred to the photographs', suggesting that their inclusion in the book is a concession to providing a context for his best-known series of paintings. In his preface he describes them only in formal terms as 'groups of nude figures posed in action against a backdrop of empty sky' and closes the paragraph that explains their inclusion by asserting, 'To me they existed only in connection with the technical possibilities of photography in which I had been interested at that time.' Beneath one of the reproductions Vaughan has added, separate to the sequence of selected journal entries, a short paragraph headed 'Note in Retrospect' that explains the history of the beach and its relative seclusion in those pre-war days – thus explaining that there was no need for them to observe conventional 'decencies' when cavorting unclothed.<sup>14</sup>

Vaughan may claim that the Pagham photographs were primarily technical experiments, and may attempt to explain their depictions of male nudity as incidental, but their placement in *Journal & Drawings* reveals to the reader their emotional significance and Vaughan, despite the sober words of his preface,

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<sup>14</sup> There are two more passages headed 'Note in Retrospect' that Vaughan includes in *Journal & Drawings*; one covers his short spell in Guildford jail (pp.36-8) and the other addresses his written correspondence with Raul (pp.172-4).



intended this to be apparent to the observant reader. We know from Vaughan's journal that by the mid-1960s his photographs had become very important to him. Surrounded by photos of young men in his home studio he reminisces about a pre-war infatuation and writes, 'The world of fantasy. The Mona Lisa smile of Farrant. Photo taken in 1936.' (10.07.65; J47, p.41) His handwriting a scrawl, likely due to drunkenness at a late hour, Vaughan casts his eye over the images that surround him and rues missed opportunities when recollecting a student at the Central School fifteen years prior and the tears of Raul (pp.41-2). By the mid-1960s his photographs were the residue of old lost longings; he continues this entry by wishing he could invite over a man named John Longworth, sighing, 'like you did at 21 to the boy in Golders Green. Hoping for what. For the image. For the magical solution.' (p.43) Weeks later he remarks with amusement that a typical 'man of business' has a photo of his wife or daughter on his desk, whereas he has a naked youth whose image he had employed in an autoerotic session and whose seated pose, which he takes care to detail, recalls 'the sort of position a young boy often sits on the beach' ('Monday August 1<sup>st</sup>'; J47, p.64). It is significant that the double-page reproduction that opens the book is a photograph in which a nude man walks by the water's edge with his back turned to the photographer who follows behind. In his first year of journal-writing Vaughan recalled his photography on Pagham beach and its encapsulation of his frustrated desires, in particular for his friend Len: 'He was wet and tight like a bud when he came out of the water [...] I could only touch him through the lens of my camera.' (06.02.40; J2, p.73) He recalls wanting 'paint and time and long patient working' to adequately capture this vision but rues that the photograph provides only a compromised, mediated representation, 'only the residue of his full and supple animality' (p.79). The photo that opens *Journal & Drawings* evokes the eye in pursuit of the young male body and in doing so offers a neat metaphorical summation of Vaughan's preoccupation with the male nude and his career-long struggle to capture it. The positioning of the single-page reproductions, meanwhile, helps to lend weight to his anti-war argument in the selected journal entries by accompanying them with visions of male bodies in uninhibited motion and peaceful accord. The double-page reproduction that closes the volume evidences an experimental approach to development whereby a swooning male portrait, eyes closed, and a curled male body are superimposed over an expanse of sand impressed with a footprint – the trace of human presence and a suggestive symbol of Vaughan's lifelong effort to evoke not only the presence but also the absence of his subject. The footprint at once tells us that someone was here but is no longer, much as Vaughan's mid-60s paintings simultaneously conjure and erase their figures.

While Vaughan's preface and retrospective note temper the importance of the Pagham photographs by insisting on a specific context so as to avoid accusations of indecency, the careful placement of these images communicates their importance powerfully to the reader. In a 1972 journal entry Vaughan remarks with some pride the interest these pictures garnered from the gay playwright Edward Albee who encountered them in *Journal & Drawings* (14.02.72; J55, p.16).

In his preface Vaughan explains the problem of 'the more subjective artist' being asked to 'illustrate' their own writings and makes a succinct case for the unique properties of each medium that deny straight translation between text and image. On this basis he asserts, 'The drawings therefore which accompany this text seldom have any direct connection with what is written', and that any calculated attempt to match drawings to text would only have occurred 'on a subconscious level'. The drawings chosen, however, are 'contemporaneous and part of the same total situation', which leads us again to Vaughan's policy of selecting those that arose from 'the same direct, informal and compulsive urge as the journal entries themselves'. The images that adorn the front and back of the khaki-coloured dustjacket of *Journal & Drawings* introduce the reader to this relationship, being unidentifiable as illustrations of any specific scene or dynamic. All three images, none of which are listed in the 'Index of Drawings' (J&D, pp.217-9) or credited anywhere on the dustjacket itself, are pencil studies of compositions of figures drawn with thick lines and heavy shading. In the top left-hand corner of the front cover is a study of two figures, one bent at an unnatural angle, seeming to grapple with one another. The larger image beneath this drawing and the book's title, which is aligned to the right-hand side of the cover, appears to be an assembly with at least two identifiable figures – one occupying the left side of the composition, one occupying the right – and a dense mass of forms congregated in the centre with hard, dark shading dominating the right side so as almost to erase the head of the occupying figure. Meanwhile the back cover consists of no text and simply one large image: a study for what appears to be a monumental figure, arms at its side and fist clenched like the *kouros* that so inspired Vaughan in the late 1950s and early 1960s, at once overlaid and emerging from a mass of tangled, arcing lines. Again planes of heavy shading both form a background and buffet the figure, while in this instance a rectangular panel seemingly cut out of the left-side of the figure's chest acts as a window through to the blackened space beyond. These images of faceless figures all appear to be studies for compositions to be scaled up and worked in oils or gouache and as such are glimpses into Vaughan's working process. The implication is that,

like these studies in pencil, Vaughan's journal entries are the workings of ideas, the scaffolding upon which he as an artist builds a larger picture.

Throughout the first four parts of *Journal & Drawings* – those parts that cover the wartime period of journal-writing – Vaughan places images amongst the text so that the reader can trace the history of his burgeoning observational powers. Facing the second page of his preface we find a full-page reproduction of an ink sketch shaded with wash and decorated with some phrases in French that offers the earliest iteration of his trademark situation: an interaction between nude figures in a partially abstracted environment (p.9). Once the reader passes the Pagham photographs all of the images are drawings. These drawings were mostly made in pen (often accented with wash) and capture individual people, primarily soldiers, or intimate social scenes between no more than four people at a time. The 'Index of Drawings' preserves the anonymity of all the subjects sketched with the sole, curious exception of Freddie whose likeness appears to accompany an entry affectionately describing his spontaneous and child-like character (p.52). Predominantly situated on the lower half of a page with the text of the journal above, these snapshots of life in the Corps are the most obviously illustrative of all the images in *Journal & Drawings*. In each individual case they do not correspond directly to the people or episodes recounted in the text they accompany; for instance a 1940 sketch of men playing snooker does not particularly relate to the text above in which Vaughan comments upon a news report of casualties sustained for the sake of rescuing Norway's rulers (p.22). Yet the placement of such everyday scenes of activity and interaction amongst material on political or ethical subjects frequently achieves a suggestive contrast that bolsters his anti-war argument with evidence of his empathy for his fellow man. Taken collectively, the sketches of barracks life enrich the elegiac picture of wartime presented by the journal text in which men sheltered from the atrocities happening elsewhere pass by one another and only occasionally come into meaningful contact. Some developments in Vaughan's visual style are charted in the course of the wartime pages. Two separate pages are devoted entirely to scrapbook-style arrangements of small studies in a more recognizably Neo-Romantic vein (with their dribbling ink lines, coiled forms and heavy shading) accompanied by annotations in Vaughan's handwriting (p.51 & p.55). Soon after the division between parts two and three, a division that establishes a fault line in the early summer of 1943, two full pages of drawings effectively illustrate a period in which Vaughan was engaging with and applying his reading on art theory; the first shows five variations on what are annotated 'Talking Stones', mysterious objects with faces in the style of Picasso's (p.61), while the second arranges some studies of

a shell-like form recalling the abstract sculptures of Henry Moore (p.62). Drawings of people and places continue to accompany the text of the journal throughout part three yet there is, most tellingly, only a single drawing in the seventeen pages of part four. This drawing is a composition in pencil entitled 'Eyes' that assembles several faces or portions of faces as if clustered around a figure aligned to the left (p.111). Placed at the bottom of the final page of part four, a part in which Vaughan provides a number of character studies from his journal-writing at Eden Camp, this drawing seems to signal the completion of Vaughan's wartime training as a skilled observer and portraitist.

The drawings that appear in the post-war years of parts five, six, and seven are not placed to evoke a specific closed world but instead chart the development of Vaughan's ability to transform the raw material gathered through observation into the dense, semi-abstracted compositions of his later canvasses. Part five begins with an entry dated '14 August 1948' that immediately alerts the reader to a significant elapse of time since the closing entry of the previous part, dated '15 March 1946'; the intervening page offers all the explanation required regarding the missing period of Vaughan's life and work with a full-page study of two nude figures that would be recognizable to any reader familiar with his post-war style of figuration (p.112). A further full-page arrangement of annotated pencil drawings (p.115) is shortly followed by a double-page spread (pp.118-9) as the reader is given an insight into the production of Vaughan's series of interiors with figures in the late 1940s and early 1950s. These detailed drawings of bold, angular interior scenes, which are all listed in the index simply as 'studies for painting', are the first examples in *Journal & Drawings* of studies that aimed to contain the shapes of figures and their environments within the bounds of a canvas. Documents of a period that was prolific pictorially but sparse in terms of journal-writing, these pages of drawings likely account for the lack of written material on the ideas informing Vaughan's practice at this time. The drawings henceforth are mostly compositions of depersonalized figures, or sketches that illustrate the accounts of his travels, that mark the onset of his mature style. Yet once again Vaughan's placement of drawings addresses a paucity of suitable material to select from the journal in the instance of four pages of scrapbook-style pages covering his 1959 residency in Iowa (pp.157-60). Many of the images in the latter parts of *Journal & Drawings* contribute little to the emotional tenor of the journal text itself, a notable exception being the full-page gouache 'Group of figures – Amacuzac' that appears after the close of part five and Vaughan's admission of the powerful memories that persist of Raul in Amacuzac (p.168). Instead the images continue to chart Vaughan's development as an artist,

with two of the sketches that best represent his mature style of figuration and composition being placed in entries that specifically address Vaughan's readings of and responses to art theory (p.188 & p.199).

The emotional, autobiographical resonance of the drawings in relation to the text is only resumed in the final pages of the book. A full-page pencil sketch titled 'Boxer', drawn in 1964, depicts a long-limbed figure likely sprawled in his corner whilst a figure behind lifts his hand to his head. The boxer's torso is rendered in a riot of shading indicating significant damage to his body. This image appears opposite the penultimate entry, dated '9 August 1965', in which Vaughan describes the '[s]ymptoms of being in love', among them 'a slight feeling of inflation on the left side of the thorax' and '[u]nusual marks on various parts of the body'; thus the boxer's body appears as an exaggeration of this beleaguered physical state (pp.214-5). Beneath the final published entry, in which Vaughan describes one's 'tenuous' hold on life and the strangeness of death's omnipresence, is the pencil sketch simply titled 'Study for painting' (p.216). Appearing beneath Vaughan's closing remark on the difficulty of being prepared for death when one always assumes 'that there will be a future', a pair of figures stretch their limbs to struggle against the pressure of clashing black lines and in doing so mark the moment when the words and images produced in tandem for decades converge at the same point: a fixation on the individual and their bodily existence under constant strain. By ending the narrative with this image of the individual under pressure Vaughan destabilizes any suggestion that success has brought him any more comfort and emotional security than is afforded anyone else.

Ahead of the publication of *Journal & Drawings* Vaughan made the late decision to take the original drawings selected for inclusion to the Redfern Gallery where they would be exhibited to coincide with the book's release date (27.10.66; J48, p.51). Upon publication he received much praise and congratulations from friends who 'enjoyed the Journal & were moved by it' (08.11.66; J48, p.57). He claims that he 'certainly never expected' such kind words, having rather expected 'either an embarrassed [*sic*] silence from friends, or a pretty sharp attack for self indulgent, waffling, sentimentality & half-baked metaphysics [*sic*]'. If Vaughan had been wary of the reception from those close to him then he was even more wary of what reviewers may write. In one of two significant journal entries that respond to reviews of the published edition, Vaughan remarks:

Apart from an article in the Guardian (in which, for the first time, I am publically labelled a homosexual, without the least malice) & 3

line notices in other papers [it] has passed almost unnoticed [sic] by the press. On balance I am more ~~pleased~~ relieved than sorry. (11.12.66; J48, p.61)

Although he admits, 'I would have liked acclaim for my literary prowess', he concedes that above all he 'dreaded a scandal, which could easily have been made'. After leaving the subject of reviews for a paragraph Vaughan returns by responding to '[Edward] Lucie-Smith in the Listener' who seizes upon "one rather betraying sentence" in *Journal & Drawings* as evidence of Vaughan's "limitation of sensibility": 'The sentence refers not to my homosexual preoccupation but ^a basic narcissism – ^'being in complete possession of my inner world'. So what! What does he expect.' Vaughan quibbles semantically by wondering who in 'the creative arts' could boast 'unlimited sensibilities' (pp.61-2). Remembering his hopes for the published journal he begins a new paragraph:

'I think that a handful of young people, also no doubt of limited sensibility have drawn some solace & enjoyment from reading it & finding some personal identification with a public figure who, it is so often assumed, must necessarily be beyond the problems & perplexion in which they suffer. Since I did likewise years ago in the pages of Proust, Gide & others [...]' (p.62)

From this entry it is clear that Vaughan believed he had contributed to gay male culture as honest an account of his experiences as possible; his conscience clear he closes this entry by attacking the controversy surrounding (and calls to ban) *Last Exit to Brooklyn* (1964), which he feels is simply 'a perfectly honest & often deeply perceptive account of sexual behaviour in particular circumstances'. Yet Vaughan was still insecure about the critical reception afforded to *Journal & Drawings*; precisely one month later he devotes an entire entry to responding to two unfavourable reviews. 'First really venomous [sic] attack on my Journal in Mario Amaya's Art Book', he writes, 'It hurts of course. It would be silly to pretend these things don't.' (11.01.67; J49, p.7) Vaughan is most hurt by what he believes is material quoted out of context leading to unfair generalizations concerning his prose style. Undeterred by Amaya's apparent suggestion that the published drawings were 'studio sweepings', Vaughan magnanimously expresses more concern at the possibility of having embarrassed friends such as Patrick Woodcock by relaying specific anecdotes. Yet this entry turns again to the issue of certain passages from *Journal & Drawings* being singled out and separated from their context – this time in a review by a 'Mr Hodgson'<sup>15</sup> who disliked Vaughan's prose (pp.7-8). Having taken such care to curate *Journal & Drawings* as an integrated composition of text

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<sup>15</sup> Simon Hodgson, writing in *Art & Artists*, January 1967.

and images, Vaughan was most wounded by the notion that this book, this autobiographical artefact aiming to give the fullest account of his life and work possible, could be undermined by being unceremoniously pulled apart.

Vaughan's determination to consolidate his public image with *Journal & Drawings* was such that his task of self-editorship had prompted him to reflect on whether his journal-writing could continue: 'Preparations for the publication of this Journal – or parts of it – really imply its end in its original form – as a repository for private thoughts.' (22.06.66; J48, p.27) He nevertheless proposes that there is 'no reason why' he 'should not continue to write clearly unpublishable stuff' and accordingly spends the summer months of 1966 writing extensively on his fascination with the appearance and variety of male genitals and on various fantasy scenarios. During such periods Vaughan may have felt liberated by the distillation and publication of his journal-writing thus far in a single book. Yet his reaction to the praise of his closest friends – including Patrick Woodcock, Patrick Proctor, and Prunella Clough – reveals an important aspect of Vaughan's own impression of *Journal & Drawings* and its significance; 'Do they mean it', he asks, 'or [is] it the sort of consolation one gives to a dying friend.' (01.11.66; J48, p.53) Having declared two years prior that he had made his image, that there was now 'nothing more to say' (24.10.64; J46, p.30), the publication of *Journal & Drawings* seemed to mark the death of 'Keith Vaughan', his friends' praise taking on the quality of an extended eulogy. In choosing which ideas, attitudes, and responses to publish from a journal that spanned his adult years Vaughan crystallized a version of himself for public consumption and posthumous reference. The question of when he would die was irrelevant, for he had written his own epitaph. Vaughan did not live to see the alterations made to the published edition of his journal in its two subsequent reprints. The 1989 version, renamed *Journals 1939-1977*, added the selections made by Alan Ross from the years 1966-77 but drastically reduced the number of drawings included, re-ordered them, removed the Pagham photographs, and abridged Vaughan's original preface so as not to draw attention to these changes; the Faber Finds reprint, a paperback first published in 2010, preserved these significant changes. Nevertheless, the 1966 book *Journal & Drawings* survives, where available, as the version for which Vaughan wished to be read and remembered. The original journal manuscripts, meanwhile, survive as the fullest possible account of his life; the raw material of all his remembrances and the rehearsals of his arguments. *Journal & Drawings* may have presented itself as the working notes of an artist, but it was nevertheless a carefully curated autobiographical artefact; the full working notes on how Vaughan gave form to his thoughts and experiences, the

material from which he would construct his identity as a man and as an artist, can be found in the sixty-one volumes of the original journal manuscript.



## **Self-construction: a Conclusion**

This study has placed the journal of Keith Vaughan at the centre of his necessary re-appraisal as a significant figure in the history of twentieth-century British art. As interest grows in Vaughan's corpus of unique yet universalizing visions of male bodies, the journal must be returned to and referred to in any attempt to understand his perspective on his subject matter and the methods of his visual practice. By examining the many forms of his journal-writing this study has argued that such a practice of working through ideas and experiences was central to his creative life. There are few who would deny that the practice of journal-writing should be considered a creative process; but this study has put forward the case for journal-writing as not only a creative but a constructive process, concerned not simply with the transformation of material (experiences, memories, reveries) into new forms but with an often strategic endeavour to constantly make and re-make its subject, the self, in response to external influences and its own author's expectations. In following the threads of Vaughan's ideas, responses, and resolutions, this study has reconstructed the reasoning by which Vaughan put forward his arguments on key subjects and his assessments of his own character. In many ways this study, in addition to being a literary analysis, can also be deemed a kind of critical biography, tracing as it does the twin currents of Vaughan's account of himself in the journal and the necessary context of biographical detail. But this study has not simply paraphrased Vaughan's journal or shaped its contents into a recognizably biographical narrative; instead, it has put forward a new way of writing critically about journals and diaries by pulling out the thematic strands of a huge and complex text and following the arguments of each. In this respect, this study has afforded the journal the kind of scholarly analysis usually reserved for more traditionally 'literary' texts such as the novel.

Most importantly for the academic field of life-writing, this study has offered Vaughan's journal as a case study of what can be gained from the close study of journals and diaries and the analysis of their literary effects. This study has revealed Vaughan's journal to be a text full of literary effects ranging from subtleties of word choice and phrasing to the proliferation and interweaving of narratives and the use of scenes and characterization. Language and such literary means of organization as narrative can be considered, respectively, as the material and tools employed in Vaughan's self-construction through the practice of journal-writing. As Vaughan's journal-writing is literary it follows that his identity is a literary construct.

Accordingly, Vaughan constantly checks himself against the journal's literary account of his life, resulting in the self-aware commentaries that weave throughout the journal's text like the authorial interventions that comment upon the progress of a protagonist in a fictional text.

The task of self-editorship that produced *Journal & Drawings* also gave Vaughan the experience of a literary account of his death. By taking material from what had been, until that point, a personal journal and editing it to produce an autobiographical artefact, he brought his story to an end, however ambiguously, and so brought about a symbolic death that couldn't help but be confirmed by the kind words of friends upon publication and by the newspaper reviews which must have seemed like obituaries. Very few of us have this odd experience of seeing the unveiling of a monument to our life and work whilst we are still alive. For Vaughan the publication of *Journal & Drawings* and the death it represented marked the end of the journal as an exercise in self-construction and its tipping into a pattern of self-destruction. From 1966 onwards the journal did not adopt the conventions of any hitherto unexplored literary genre and nor did it theorize as to any revised position or type in accordance with which Vaughan could continue to construct himself. The journal stagnated, becoming truly repetitive in its complaints without offering any positive action as remedy. Beginning in 1974 Vaughan began another curatorial effort with regards to the journal; but instead of editing the text as he did years earlier for *Journal & Drawings*, he went back over each volume so far and annotated their front covers with a handwritten list of subjects covered whilst restoring within their pages some names and details deleted years previously. These expansions were made not for the benefit of a publisher but for a posthumous reader, making them a final gesture of honesty through complete disclosure and another literary preparation for death. Once Vaughan knew that his bowel cancer, diagnosed in 1975, would prove terminal, his journal increasingly became dominated by the subject of suicide. Writing about his own death and how it may be achieved brought its reality under a degree of literary control. Suicide, accompanied by the writing of his final ever journal entry, was ultimately the only way in which Vaughan conceived of and accepted his death. He had already brought his narrative to an end on the page once and he was well-rehearsed to do it once again. On the morning of 4<sup>th</sup> November 1977, a lethal cocktail of barbiturates slowly effected Vaughan's physical death whilst his pen effected the death of the journal and its literary account of Keith Vaughan. His final gesture was literary: just as he had written himself into existence, constructing his identity in the pages of his journal, so he wrote himself out of existence.

The practice of journal-writing enabled Vaughan to construct himself through literary means. Language and narrative may provide the literary materials and tools but we need to understand why the journal or diary is suitable as a site for self-construction. The findings of this study support an argument that goes beyond simply stating that journals and diaries provide the transcribed evidence for the widely accepted notion that selfhood is affirmed through storytelling: Vaughan's journal makes apparent the requirement for identity formation, for the construction of the self, to begin with a defence. As children our vulnerability constitutes a crisis from which we only emerge once we can find a place in the world, once we can learn our relationships to the external influences and threats we face; in that difficult space between childhood and adulthood the nature of these relationships changes due to numerous social and biological factors and new and more complex relationships emerge, meaning that once again we must protect ourselves first before venturing forth with ambition and purpose. When the subject of a journal or diary is born with the commencement of the practice of writing and the resulting text (and many journals and diaries are commenced in that adolescent stage) the situation is often similar. The newly born subject of a journal must first assess their situation, the newness of which or the lack of stability of which being so often the catalyst for the commencement of writing. The subject must then establish their own boundaries, their relationships to external influences and threats, and consolidate those boundaries so as to create the defined space for their site of self-construction; in Vaughan's case, this space was often figured as a 'citadel' with strong, guarded walls. Not all journals and diaries commence in the state of crisis that Vaughan's does, but many are initiated from the need to establish such a space, the need to defend the individual's sense of being apart and therefore distinct from the world around them. The first and second chapters of this study analysed how Vaughan opened a space for his existence as an individual by mounting a defence against, respectively, the ideological threat posed by the political and social consensus regarding masculinity and specifically war-going masculinity, and the more immediate threat of his difficulties with personal interaction within male society. Only once these defensive positions had been established, resulting in the formation of an outsider identity that combined the principled objector with the perceptive observer, could Vaughan then construct his identity in more aspirational terms – a creator theorized first as an intellectual, then as an ideal type of the artist – by considering what he would like to be and how he could assume such a status.

Let us return to the literary qualities of Vaughan's journal and the literary effects that constitute the materials and tools of his self-construction. Vaughan

could only work with the material available to him, meaning he was reliant on the conventions of certain literary genres; he could not have become an objector without familiarizing himself with the rhetoric of anti-war writing, just as he could not become an intellectual without absorbing the arguments of poets and philosophers. This study has referred to the 'inner life' as Vaughan perceived it, something as essentially mysterious as the 'Truth' to which he regularly alluded, yet raises the question: is the self only ever constructed according to the conventions of genre? The reliance on conventions of literary genres that we find in Vaughan's journal offers evidence that genre does not simply reflect or allow for the expression of existing, more essential conceptions of selfhood but instead provides the very materials from which the self can be constructed. The greater the diversity of genres and media that proliferate and become available to authors and users, the greater the diversity of materials and tools there will be to aid the self-construction of the individual. Social media platforms, which themselves link to other platforms and various other sources, enable an individual (or, often, a group) to represent themselves through a curated combination of photos, text, and music (to name only the most general categories of media available). Such platforms, in creating the new and accepted genre of the 'profile-page' with its numerous links to other pages, accounts, and media, have developed our own constructions of self beyond the conventions offered by more traditionally linear literary narratives and thus furthered our understanding of the self as a network. So too the form of the journal or diary, rather than simply pointing inwards to uncover the mysteries of its subject's inner life, points outwards to any number of other texts and sources and in doing so becomes a fabric of quotation and commentary. The journal, even when only concerned with written text and not images, is highly interdisciplinary and omnivorous. The interdisciplinary nature of the journal or diary in many ways predicts the developments made by social media platforms. The journal or diary, unlike the profile-page which is always governed by certain unshifting parameters and by administrators, is not a genre; it is a space allowing for the proliferation of forms and genres. The journal allows for the absorption of generic conventions into a continuous narrative of self-construction. The journal borrows what it needs from the conventions of assorted genres in order to address the needs of its subject. Vaughan used journal-writing to absorb literary genres including the defence, the political/theoretical tract, the quotidian diary, romantic prose, autobiography, literary criticism, art theory, travelogue, and sexological research report. In its absorption of the styles and conventions of such genres, Vaughan's journal collapses the distinctions between genres, as all journals and diaries are capable of doing. If

life-writing scholars are to understand the developments of social media platforms and other emerging media that posit the self as network, then they must further the study of the form and contents of the journal or diary and the evidence we find within such texts that identity is formed through response; that the self is constructed according to the conventions of genre.

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